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‘STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND’

CONVERGING AND ACCOMODATING CELTIC IDENTITIES IN BALLARAT 1851 - 1901

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This is a thesis submitted for total fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Associate Professor Kevin Livingston, whose sad and untimely death left many postgraduates at the University of Ballarat without a mentor. At your request, Kevin, and in your honour, we've kept up the momentum.

It is also dedicated to my husband, Richard, whose great love of his native Cornwall inspired the work in the first place.

INTRODUCTION

> "The gold-digger's work must ever be a factor in the great sum of Australian history. … across the many-threaded history of our young national life, the wealth, and enterprise, and influence of the gold-fields runs in a bright broad band of gold, and, in the far-off future, the historical student, when he searches among the foundation stones of empire here, will find the base of one of the strongest columns of national greatness inscribed with the names of the golden cities of Victoria, and, first of all, the name of the first and the richest - Ballarat."

W.B.WITHERS, *History of Ballarat from the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, Second Edition, Ballarat, Niven and Company, 1887; facsimile edition, 1980; Queensberry Hill Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1980, p 327.

In June 1995, Weston Bate delivered a paper entitled "Ballarat: Built for Federation"[1]. He saw Ballarat's development - political, economic, and social - as historically significant in the light of the city's extraordinarily high vote for Federation in 1898. By the time of the referendum vote, Ballarat's deep commitment to Federation was well-known to most of the players in the debate.[2] Bate, analysing the first fifty years, identified the city's strong tradition of social co-operation, and its sense of destiny, which, by the end of the century, was not only well-developed, but simultaneously threatened by the growth and supremacy of Melbourne - constituting a strong motivation for a major Federation "YES" vote. In this light, the city's broad vision may

[1] Bate, Weston, "Ballarat: Built for Federation" , Seminar, University of Ballarat, 21 June 1995.
[2] Henry Bourne Higgins, noted anti-billite, speaking in Ballarat in May 1898, told his audience that he had been warned not to come to Ballarat, "as the people were ten to one for the bill. Cries of "So we are" resounded." *Courier*, 21 May, 1898, p2.

have been less a factor of nobility of perspective, and more a parochial and paranoid desire to rise above the encroachment of the state's capital, Melbourne. Whatever the motivation, Bate claims for Ballarat that the city was always national, rather than colonial. The city was, from earliest days, convinced of its own significance and importance, and firmly believed in its destiny to become a force in the land. This perceived 'destiny' reached its ultimate expression in the drive for Ballarat to become the capital of Australia, a campaign which had been prefigured by enormously successful Royal visits,[3] and by the visit of the Federal convention delegates in February, 1898. The paroxysms of loyalty into which Ballarat contorted itself during these events are evidence enough of the eagerness of the city to be heeded at a national level. The desire to attain national independence was, however, held firmly and safely within the secure confines of the British Empire. The colony which was seen by the *Ballarat Star* in 1870 as being peopled by lone "adventurers on a doubtful and somewhat dangerous quest"[4] somehow moved towards joyful anticipation in January 1899 of "a union that shall at once strengthen themselves and strengthen the Empire to which they are proud to belong."[5] A core consideration of this dissertation is the evolution of multiple and converging Celtic identities through a process of adaptation and accommodation. The *denouement* of such a process amongst the Celts might go some way towards explaining the strong vote for Federation by Ballarat as a whole.

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[3] Particularly the tour of HRH Prince Alfred, who visited Victoria, and Ballarat, in 1867-68. See newspaper reports, and McKinlay, Brian: *The First Royal Tour, 1867 -68*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1970, pp. 49 - 105.
[4] *Ballarat Star*, 3 June, 1870.
[5] *Ballarat Star*, 26 January, 1899.

This introductory chapter examines the theoretical context of some of the debates on Australian nationalism in terms of the interplay between the ideas of White[6] and Melleuish[7] on the possibility of a true national history. It discusses the methodological implications of regional and ethnic group studies, and the debate over the significance of geography and cultural origins in the light of their applicability to an understanding of Australian history. Finally, the chapter sets out a rationale for the importance of Ballarat as a case study: "most Federal city"[8], a city founded and built on the mythical and obsessive passion for gold.

The Celts of Ballarat were, of course, one of many ethnic groups existing in Ballarat in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By far the largest group were the English, whose experience on the goldfields, coming from (in almost every sense) the same social, cultural and economic background, would have had much in common with the smaller Celtic groups. Richard Broome points out that the English born in Victoria numbered 170,679, or one third of the population, in 1861, but this had declined to 113,432 or ten per cent of the whole by 1901.[9] The English legacy was critical to the early goldfields societies in Melbourne and Ballarat. Most colonial institutions - law, government, administration, business practices, as well as town planning and surveys, architecture, social institutions, churches, libraries, schools, entertainment and even sports - were modelled on England. Englishmen

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[6] White, Richard, *Inventing Australia Images and Identity 1688-1980,* George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981.
[7] Melleuish, Gregory, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia, A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History,* Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
[8] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City The First Generation at Ballarat 1851 - 1901*, Melbourne University Press, 1978, Melbourne, p. 266.
[9] Broome, Richard, *The Victorians Arriving,* Fairfax, Syme and Weldon, 1984, Sydney, p. 100. Broome points out that the English were slightly over-represented in the Melbourne and Geelong areas, and in the central goldfields region.

headed most government and social institutions, and colonial efforts to import English flora and fauna meant that much of Victoria even physically resembled England.

In Ballarat, too, the English-born were numerically the most important ethnic group. Yet this importance, as Bate points out, was steadily eroded. Against other migrants from the British Isles, the ratio of English-born fell from 5:3 in 1857 to 13:10 in 1871. In Sebastopol they were outnumbered in the ratio of 14:17 in 1861, and 17:28 in 1871.[10]

Part of the focus of this thesis lies in examining the smaller ethnic groups (like the Celts) in order to understand something of the nature of their experience in goldfields society. Such an experience would be - in part - an expression of their own particular identity in the face of the more dominating influence of the numerically superior English. A tension was created within British immigrant groups which arose partly from "nostalgia for the homeland, the erosion of identity, and the feeling of a divided loyalty".[11]

This dissertation, whilst acknowledging the importance of the English-born majority, with their probable similar cultural accommodation and changing allegiances, believes a narrower focus on the Celts of Ballarat gives considerable scope for comparison along a continuum without becoming too broad and unwieldy - as, for example, might be the case if there was an attempt to include the English, Chinese, and other European ethnic groups.

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[10] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City,* 1978, pp. 147-148.
[11] Hardy, John (ed.), *Stories of Australian Migration*, 1988, University of New South Wales Press, p. 52.

The issue of 'Being Australian' - and what this entails - has preoccupied the minds of residents and visitors to this country since early colonial times. Part of the problem has been that Australians have always had to resolve the hard questions about such issues in relation to, and in tandem with, the question of British nationality. Early commentators did not find this difficult, but as the years, and the debate, progressed, the ability to hold two such concepts[12] became more difficult and less relevant.

As the century advanced, progressive visitors and commentators to the Australian colonies began to identify what they believed to be a distinct type which was emerging into colonial society. This new 'type' could be identified more clearly in the native-born, and although some believed that the new racial type was inferior - owing, in part, it was believed, to the debilitating warm climate of the South, as opposed to the bracing, heroic climate of the North - many social commentators were agreeably surprised at the quality of emigrant stock. But even though such trends were noted and welcomed, they were almost always discussed in terms of their relation to Britain. Observers were anxious to confirm that the best qualities of the British race had survived the transplanting to the colonies, and that the Empire was indeed proliferating and spreading its superior qualities to the utmost ends of the earth. In this context, the emergence of a successful 'Australian' identity was hailed with relief and a certain complacency. There was relief that the essential elements of the British race had not been diluted, and complacency that the infinite potential of the Empire was continuing to be realised.

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[12] Noel McLachlan describes the twin concepts of nationalism and imperialism as "conceptual anacondas". McLachlan, Noel: *Waiting for the Revolution A History of Australian Nationalism*, 1989, Penguin Books, Victoria, Acknowledgements.

In 1869, John Martineau published *Letters from Australia,* in which he considered the nature of the relationship between "Mother and Daughter", (as he identified the British/colonial relationship), and debated the possibility of a termination or cutting loose of the ties which bound the colonies to the mother country. The largely unchallenged nature of the colonies' relationship with Britain at the time of writing probably accounts for the slight conceit of Martineau's prose and his condescending attitude - he finds it inconceivable that 'Australians' and particularly Victorians should feel the need to separate and renounce the benefits flowing from their membership of the Empire:

> It is in the nature of things almost inevitable that the second generation of a colony should be inferior to the first. …These old colonists… know well how much they owe to having been born and bred amongst the historic monuments and associations of the old country of their forefathers, and that it is not mere foolish sentiment that binds them to it. None feel so keenly how real and not sentimental is the loss which their children suffer by being removed from and in part deprived of them. None regret so bitterly the relaxing and severing of bond after bond, or (if it were in danger) would cling so closely to the last but strongest bond of all - allegiance to the English Throne.[13]

In this scheme of things, there is little room for colonists to be anything other than distant Englishmen. Richard Twopeny, writing in 1883, discerned a more independent resident emerging, but was divided as to whether or not this tendency was a positive one: "What modification then, you will ask, does the middle-class Englishman undergo in Australia? In some ways, a deterioration; in others, an amelioration." Twopeny decried the Australian love of drinking, and poor dressing, and identified a "general carelessness" and "roughening of manner" as the negative sides of this newly emerging

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[13] Martineau, John: *Letters from Australia 1869*, Longmans, Green and Company, London, p 161.

Australian character. In contrast, he welcomed the greater independence of manner and thought, higher tolerance, and greater kindness which also seemed a refreshing colonial development:

> In Australia a man feels himself a unit in the community, a somebody; in England he is one amongst twenty seven millions, a nobody. …The Englishman in Australia improves more than he deteriorates.[14]

The experience of both the English and the Celts on the goldfields of colonial Australia, despite the numerical dominance of the English, would have been subjected to this new Australian 'ratio', and the 'merging' and accommodating experience possibly altered by the different circumstances existing in the society. The Celtic groups, in each case historically dominated in some way by the English, could possibly envisage a changing relationship with a hitherto colonising group, and perhaps even foresaw the possibility of a positive outcome in this new colonial situation. Martineau was gloomy about the abandonment of the ideal of "allegiance to the British throne", but acknowledged a changing process, but Twopeny in fact foreshadowed improvement. Both acknowledged a process of change.

The numerical dominance of the English is not, in this sense, as significant as the fact of their common background, and the manner in which this might change in a new and altered physical and social environment such as the goldfields presented.

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[14] Twopeny, Richard, *Town Life in Australia*, 1883, facs. ed. 1973, Penguin, Melbourne, Australia, pp. 89-90.

Russell Ward's *The Australian Legend*,[15] coming halfway through the twentieth century, achieved popular appeal with his characterisation of the typical Australian as the "rough, honest, easy-going bushman, laconic, resourceful, loyal to his mates…."[16] Ward's images have lingered in the popular mind, despite the increasingly urban nature of this so-called 'rural' image. The myth of a nation whose strength derives from a rustic, 'bush' image was earlier informed by the poetic debate conducted about the merits of the bush over the city by 'Banjo' Paterson, and Henry Lawson. In 1930, W.K.Hancock, continuing the 'British' tradition of Australian nationalism, wrote of Australians as "independent Australian Britons"[17], and it has only been in the latter stages of the twentieth century that writers have begun to seriously address the historiographical question of how one can best speak of an 'Australian' identity whilst doing justice to the increasingly multicultural society which, it was recognised, Australia had become.

Writers like Alomes (1988), White (1981), McLachlan (1989), Birrell (1995), and Melleuish (1995) have recently attempted to come to terms with a more complex Australian identity, one which will do justice to this new awareness of what being Australian has meant. Such writers have moved away from the 'monolithic' interpretation of Australia's past, and focussed on understanding the 'multiple identities' which have constituted Australia's past and present.

Alomes' *A Nation at Last?* is concerned with understanding Australian nationalism, and identifies the need to achieve this by taking into consideration the many complex interest groups which appropriate

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[15] Ward, Russell, *The Australian Legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1958.
[16] Hudson Wayne, & Bolton, Geoffrey, *Creating Australia*, 1997, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. 1.
[17] Hancock, W.K., *Australia*, Jacaranda, Brisbane, 1961[1930], p. 39.

nationalism for their own purposes. He acknowledges the complexity of the perceptions of nationalism as they are manifested in the community, and analyses these complexities as they apply in Australian society, culture, politics and economics over the last century. The ultimate aim of this study would appear to be the need to understand Australian nationalism in order to arrive at a greater understanding of "the fundamental characteristics of Australian society".[18]

Richard White and Gregory Melleuish, writing more than ten years apart, attack the 'nationalism' debate from different viewpoints, and their discussion is useful for the manner in which it articulates and polarises some important themes in the modern debate on Australian identity.

White, in *Inventing Australia*[19], takes the stance that the idea of nation is one which is imposed on a country or a population by certain groups and classes to maintain their dominance over that population. He rejects overriding models, and the idea of structural analyses, and claims that the idea of 'Australia' is a mythical one, created, not generic:

"The national identity is not 'Born of the lean loins of the country itself' … but is part of the 'cultural baggage' which Europeans have brought with them…."[20]

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[18] Alomes, Stephen, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Nature of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988*, 1988, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p.11.
[19] White, Richard: *Inventing Australia Images and Identity 1688 -1980,* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.
[20] White, Richard, *Inventing Australia,* 1981, p. ix.

White's oft-quoted and controversial rejection of the traditional interpretations of the rise of Australian nationalism resonates with the general post-modern rejection of grand narratives and 'reality':

> There is no real Australia waiting to be uncovered. A national identity is an invention. There is no point in asking whether one version of this essential Australia is truer than another because they are all intellectual constructs, neat, tidy, comprehensible - and necessarily false. They have all been artificially imposed upon a diverse landscape and population, and a variety of untidy social relationships, attitudes and emotions. When we look at ideas about national identity, we need to ask, not whether they are true or false, but what their function is, whose creation they are, and whose interests they serve.[21]

White's further illumination of his argument (in *Creating Australia* 1997)[22]ameliorates this position slightly, and takes to task Gregory Melleuish's critique of his ideas in *Cultural Liberalism in Australia* (1995). The context of their debate provides a helpful framework for my own work.

Melleuish rejects White's assertion that culture and national identity do not have their roots in the real concerns of men and women, and claims that the ultimate inadequacy of White's argument is that it impoverishes the wider "political and cultural debate" of contemporary Australia. He argues that, in attempting to de-romanticise the concept of nationalism, White has overlooked the importance of the many "strands" or "multiple identities" which contribute to a wider Australian culture. Ultimately, Melleuish is critical of White and his adherents because they ignore the many-faceted strands of human experience - the richness of the human condition.

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[21] White, *Inventing Australia,* 1981, p. viii.
[22] Hudson & Bolton, *Creating Australia* 1997, pp. 12-23.

In answering these criticisms, White stresses his own awareness of the importance of all identities - including nationalism *and* the "rich mix of the many social and cultural identities that we all construct and reinvent for ourselves…"[23] His concern is to reduce 'the nation' to its 'proper place' in history, and this, he argues, must be done by taking into consideration the many other identities of the Australian people.

Both White and Melleuish, as significant figures in the modern debate on Australian nationalism, seem to end their argument by - ironically, yet unknowingly - arriving at a similar conclusion. The differences come in the degrees of perception which they each ascribe to the passengers on the cultural/nationalism bandwagon. White, with Melleuish, acknowledges the importance of the role of ordinary folk in 'being Australian', but advances the argument that most of these 'ordinary folk' are not *actively* involved in 'inventing Australia':

> All Australians are constantly engaged in the historical process, in building cultures, in forging relationships, in developing senses of place, but only a few would name it 'Australia'.[24]

Melleuish feels that this distinction, by introducing a predominantly mercenary and unsavoury interpretation of the development of Australian culture (of which nationalism is a part), ultimately negates its richness and humanity. In such a scenario, the concerns of ordinary people are of no relevance. White, in return, believes that we must first identify and

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[23] White, "Inventing Australia Revisited", 1997, p. 21.
[24] White, "Inventing Australia Revisited", 1997, p. 21.

understand the various 'multiple identities' and interest groups - including 'ordinary' people - before we can hope to involve them in a proper study of the Australian nation:

> In a sense we need to write the nation out of the national history first; to write about the many other identities of the people we name as Australian, and the many other ways they actively express themselves as social beings and actively participate in history. Only then will we be able to give the nation its proper place in history.[25]

He does not deny the importance of the existence of these 'identities', but believes that we first need to acknowledge the nature and importance of their role in the Australian 'nation', and to try to establish some notion of the extent of the awareness of these 'ordinary' people in "actively inventing Australia."[26]

Both arguments have much to recommend them. (Both provide a useful theoretical framework for this thesis.) White's advocacy of a rich and full Australian history ameliorates his earlier firm statement that "There is no 'real' Australia waiting to be uncovered...", but he still remains firmly based in his rejection of the neat categorisation of earlier histories which use a monolithic approach to the study of Australian nationalism. In this, he is in the vanguard of a new approach which has realised that "neither realism nor a theoretically driven constructivist approach is adequate as a way of understanding Australia."[27] White's attempt to renegotiate the terms of understanding for Australian nationalism have been controversial, but

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[25] White, "Inventing Australia Revisited", 1997, pp. 21-22.
[26] White, "Inventing Australia, Revisited", 1997, p. 21.
[27] Hudson & Bolton, *Creating Australia*, 1997, p. 3.

criticisms like that of Melleuish do not negate the importance of his contribution. Melleuish reacts to White's reappraisal of approaches to the 'real Australia', and suggests that his approach confuses the issue - it creates a "mad mosaic in which fleeting images jostle each other for the attention of the consumer."[28]. He still, however, seeks a tool which will allow constructive writing about the nature of Australian culture. He embraces the idea of cultural traditions, and looks to "unravel the threads of those traditions which constitute the flourishings of a community, plot their progress and their interactions, and explain why one should grow and prosper and another "wither on the vine". [29] Melleuish seeks for the "essential unity - the objective, if largely unknowable, order which underlies all creation"[30]- and argues for the acceptance of a such a model, yet one which also incorporates variety - "the family, the world of education, of religion, of leisure activities, of politics and public affairs".[31] His criticism of White stems from his belief that White has over-reacted to the "old idea of the evolution of the nation as a monolithic identity."[32], and he urges moderation in fleeing from such rigid interpretations. He wishes to avoid the "mad mosaic".

The aim of this thesis is to take on board an understanding of both White's enriching journey towards understanding (but with no destination - "there is none"), and Melleuish's advocacy of an "objective and universal experience of humanity."[33] White's analysis serves as a reminder that the historian must beware of making too much of available data in the temptation to develop a 'big picture' or assume an ultimate coherency, whilst Melleuish's objective

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[28] Melleuish, Gregory, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia,* 1995, CUP, p. 9.
[29] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia*, 1995, p.11.
[30] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism,* 1995, p. 12.
[31] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism,* 1995, p. 15.
[32] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism*, 1995, p. 9.

underlying order must also be questioned, or at the very least kept in perspective. The two perspectives serve as a timely warning: the dangers of overstructuring versus the fear of the "mad mosaic". Both historians advocate the importance of multiple identities, but where Melleuish wishes to ascribe knowledge and action to them, White is more intent on clarifying their position within the debate.

The specific interest of this thesis is a consideration of the migration of the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people to Ballarat, and the process of their settlement between 1851 and 1901. Therefore, a second significant area of debate becomes the necessity for understanding the importance of environment - both local and international. Irish/Australian historian Patrick O'Farrell,[34] with Cornish historian Phillip Payton,[35] are very clear about the necessity to acknowledge and understand the impact of a rich cultural heritage, and diverse background on the study of Australian history.

O' Farrell and his supporters, in fact, seek their definitive 'idea' of Australia outside the physical limitations of the country. O'Farrell denies the "falsely unified" picture of Australians as one people, and seeks to throw off the restrictions which such a view imposes. He points out the error inherent in assuming that all Australians derived from one background, one socio-economic identity, one cultural tradition, and rails against the "unconscious and unfettered dictatorship of place"[36] which ignores the rich diversity of the Australian migrant background, and ultimately limits the historian's view of

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[33] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism*, 1995, p. 14.
[34] O'Farrell, Patrick, *The Irish in Australia,* Kensington, New South Wales, NSW University Press, 1986.
[35] Payton, Phillip, *The Cornish Overseas*, Alexander Associates, Fowey, Cornwall, 1999.
[36] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia* p. 10.

the 'real Australia'. O'Farrell is passionate about this existence, but claims a convincing way of defining it - by seeking outside the issues of "local importance", to a wider, more global frame of reference. "The real history of Australia" he believes, is found by embracing a wider truth and a broader humanity which is "substantially derived and sustained by the outside."[37] He is suggesting here the significance of hundreds of years of Irish (and Celtic) heritage - political and cultural - which had been part of a global scenario outside the unfettered newness of the colonial experience. Such a reality has been obscured in the past, according to O'Farrell, owing to the short-sighted attempts by earlier "lazy" historians to simplify Australian history, and seek to explain it as a history of one class, one people; this is the natural corollary of ignoring the diversity of the population, choosing instead to interpret this entity as being solely shaped by the nature of the Australian environment. This environment - "this harsh, isolated land"[38] - alone has served as the defining feature of the migrant population of Australia. It has been too easy, O'Farrell complains, to move from such a premise to the categorisation of the people of Australia as fitting into one of several convenient economic or geographic chapters - and this without taking any kind of honest consideration of their rich and disparate cultural backgrounds.

O'Farrell's distaste for the way in which historians have allowed the great sense of space in this country to influence their analyses must not be taken out of context. O'Farrell rejects the geographic determinism which makes Australians what they are, but also marks the significance of former place on those who came to Australia. He recognises the importance of the way in which the Irish themselves brought their Irishness - and their strong sense of

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[37] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia,* p. 10.
[38] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*,p.10.

place - with them "… the Irish carried Ireland with them - they *were* Ireland."[39]

A large intrinsic element of Irish emigration - and, we might add, Cornish, and Scottish and Welsh - was, according to this, imbued with an immutable sense of the land which they had left behind. Equally, this thesis argues, the migrants' sense of what they *had been* was, just as importantly, going to be shaped by that to which they were coming.

This thesis focuses on the smaller picture - the migration of the Celts to Ballarat, and their progress towards Federation - and the manner in which the individual national groups retained their first identities, and yet managed to become part of a larger, more all-encompassing unity which found its ultimate expression in the achievement of Federation. It argues that there is a need for an examination of multiple or 'other' identities which can be balanced against the idea of being 'Australian'. It describes and acknowledges the solidarity, clannishness and the rich cultural background of the various Celts, while attempting to understand what happened to them in Ballarat and how that self-image was acted upon and changed by the nature of the Ballarat environment to bring them to a fresh comprehension of, and pride in, the newly federated nation.

To seek for a 'Great Truth' about the real identity of Australia is not within the scope of this thesis. What is argued is that the smaller truths which can be observed in the minutiae of the lives of 'ordinary people' can bring us to a larger understanding about 'how we came to be what we are'. Perhaps there

is no 'real' Australia, but certainly, in Ballarat at the end of the nineteenth century, a substantial unity existed on the issue of Federation and Ballarat's place in it. A burgeoning solidarity allowed simultaneous holding of multiple identities - a commitment to the particular Celtic area, the Empire, Ballarat, and Australia.

Part of the challenge involved in writing history is the difficulty - and the skill - involved in trying to describe a living and ongoing process. History is a dynamic force, and even as the historian attempts to describe a particular moment in time, the moment has moved on. To capture such a moment - and then to describe and analyse it - is a complex procedure. There is a better chance of doing this if we take a smaller 'slice' of events, or retain a smaller focus. Informing this thesis is the belief that the large task of 'understanding' is better tackled by addressing the question to a less imposing edifice. The practicality of a smaller regional study is that it gives a clearer appreciation of those rich details which are impossible to embrace in a wider picture; it further enables us to use these details to obtain White's "richest and fullest" Australian history - colouring and bringing life to the "many other identities" which together constitute 'being Australian'.

The wider environs of the area later to be known as Ballarat was settled by British pastoralists in the 1830s and 1840s. The city itself came into being in 1851 when gold was discovered, resulting in the vigorous mixing of nationalities which flocked to the area to seek the precious metal. Gold was the catalyst - Weston Bate's 'democratic metal'[40] - yet once the process was set

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[39] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia,* p. 7.
[40] Bate, Weston, "Ballarat: Built for Federation", Seminar, University of Ballarat, 21 June, 1995; also see Bate, Weston, *Lucky City,* MUP, 1978, Chapter 9 "Melting Pot", pp.145 - 148.

in motion, it moved past any previously inherent social rules, and broke new ground in its creation and consolidation of a city "built for Federation".

What is witnessed in Ballarat is the creation and shaping of a new society, emerging phoenix-like from the ancient, rich alluvial clays and gold-bearing quartz lodes of the Ballarat goldfield. Here is the earliest beginning of a new society, and a study of the development of Ballarat demonstrates in microcosm the process by which a society has constructed itself into a viable, living community - that which Michael Evans has described as "a cultural process" through which "a population represented itself as a community."[41]

It is the contention of this thesis that the search for coherence informs the development of the city of Ballarat in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Such a search was not, generally, self-conscious: it came about as a result of the bringing together and juxtaposition of people from many nations who, in merely going about the business of gold seeking, were forced to devise ways of co-existing - of sharing wealth, creating communities, and putting down roots. At the end of the century, this unlikely mix of class, creed, and nationality submitted the highest vote in the country for Federation of the Australian colonies. Weston Bate, historian of the "Lucky City" goes so far as to entitle his final chapter "Foundation Stone of Empire and Nation".[42] This thesis explores further the process by which Ballarat as a society was shaped by the presence and actions of multiple ethnicities. It analyses the phenomenon of the interaction between the physical environment - in this case, the gold of Ballarat - and the human element - the selected Celtic races of

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[41] Evans, Michael, "The Whole Digging World Re-Examining the Goldrush Experience, 1848-1900", MA Thesis, Department of History, Monash University, 1994, p. 152.
[42] Bate, *Lucky City,* 1978, p. 251.

Great Britain, one which developed in Ballarat partly as a result of accommodation and adaptation between various Celtic groups and other non-Celtic groups not explored in this thesis. It argues that Ballarat's multi-racial composition provides a convenient model for studying the effect which can be achieved by the bringing together of multiple ethnic groups. Although these four, namely, the Cornish, the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish, were of common British background, I argue that their individual heritages were significant in the specialised 'cultural baggage' which was transported with them to the gold fields.

I do not wish to argue that the final outcome of this study is arrival at the "destination" of 'being Australian', in White's terms. I do, however, contend that to understand something of the nature of the journey is worthwhile.

Bob Reece has criticised the approach which "implies an aggregate or composite history which is the sum of its various ethnic parts"[43], claiming that such an approach can tend to overemphasise the contribution of one group over another - and therefore provide an unbalanced interpretation. Reece is critical of this 'contributionist' approach, suggesting that it is likely to be "more celebratory than analytical"[44]. And yet, it is difficult to avoid the pitfall, and it is tempting to seize on the drama of one 'ethnic' group's impact above others simply because of the rich detail found concerning that particular group. As Reece points out, to date, neither the Welsh nor the Cornish have made any large claims to overt nation-building in Australia,

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[43] Reece, Bob, quoted in Payton, Phillip, *The Cornish Overseas,* Alexander Associates, Fowey, Cornwall, 1999, p. 26.
[44] Reece, Bob, "The Welsh in Australian Historical Writing", in eds. Edwards, Gavin & Sumner, Graham *The Historical and Cultural Connections and Parallels between Wales and*

whereas the Irish have long been considered as candidates in these stakes. This can tell us many things about the nature of these groups and their contribution to Australian history, and it also prefigures the importance of Melleuish's "threads of those traditions which constitute the flourishings of a community." Each 'thread' or cultural strand must be worthy of consideration on its own terms, but when seen in terms of being interwoven into one piece of cloth, the understanding becomes even richer.

In order to focus on cultural distinctiveness and cross ethnic involvement in the building of a nationalistic community in Ballarat, a variety of sources has been used, with considerable emphasis laid on the use of secondary sources. This was a conscious decision, based on three important premises. Firstly, the present state of research dictated the timeliness of a study which seeks to draw together some of the more disparate genealogical and local history studies. Secondly, given the scope of the thesis - that is, covering four large ethnic groups - it would have been impossible to cover each major group using exhaustive primary source materials. Thirdly, as it is, although official records, census material, and newspapers were used whenever available, there is a lack of primary source material in terms of manuscripts such as diaries, letters, and personal accounts. For a study attempting to gauge ethnic loyalty and Australian nationalism, there are very few records where the voices of the people, the Celts of Ballarat, speak. The common person's understanding is sadly lacking, and their perspective must be assessed through the medium of other sources - a possibility which this thesis explores, with, I believe, some success. When the aforementioned sources are put together with other official primary and secondary sources and analysed

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Australia , Welsh Studies, Volume 4, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, United Kingdom, 1991, p.15.

overall, it is possible to gain a clearer, more balanced perspective, and some reflective insight into regional nationalism.

With these premises firmly in mind, I have chosen to concentrate particularly on contemporary newspaper reports of cultural performances which involved the Ballarat people in significant numbers, and which are relevant to the Celtic presence in Ballarat. Whilst it is necessary to retain an awareness that such events are filtered through the perceptions of the journalists reporting them, they are nevertheless significant because of their importance in identifying issues which are germane to the public at the time. They indicate social priorities, and identify the spokespeople of the ethnic groups. As well, both the prose style and the presentation of these articles aid the historian in identifying and understanding the particular historical location of the piece.

The thesis has, of necessity, focussed on the role of the men of the Ballarat Celtic world. Women were largely absent from the historical accounts consulted. We can only dimly view their role and attitudes as members of the crowd at public performances.

This thesis examines the Celtic groups of Ballarat in the light of Bate's assertions about Ballarat's comprehensive embrace of Federation; it explores the implications of the important compression of events which saw the establishment of a community which in fifty years moved from a lightly populated pastoral settlement, to a major Victorian city, offering itself, with unabashed pride and in all seriousness, to the nation as a potential national capital.

A central concern in this thesis has been to understand the significance of the impact of gold - that element which above all else shaped the consciousness of the emigrants who settled in Ballarat. Geologically ancient, the region which would become Ballarat had, for millions of years, harboured the precious
metal, which had formed in violent contortions in the innermost depths of the earth. Lower Ordovician shales, slates, and sandstones formed the bedrock of what was to become the Ballarat East Goldfield. Eastwards and westwards from the White Horse Ranges[45], volcanic forces changed the courses of former streams, and affected the general configuration of the country. Tremendous tectonic forces over millions of years shaped the field, and finally distributed the precious metal in what the miners of the nineteenth century were to regard as a capricious and seemingly random fashion. The complex discrimination with which gold had been bestowed on this region for sixty or so years tantalised, frustrated, and bewildered the thousands who flocked to do battle with it.[46]

Earliest accounts of the region identify its sylvan solitude, and the corresponding lack of awareness of the riches beneath the soil. The Reverend Hastie, on his priestly pre-gold journeyings (he arrived in the Ballarat district in 1847) could not imagine a prettier spot. It was

> the very picture of repose. The green and gold of the wattle, the gentle aspect of the land … a pleasantly picturesque pastoral country. Mount

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[45] The White Horse Ranges is a line of quartz hills which extends seven miles (11 Kms) southwards to Buninyong. See Bate, *Lucky City*, MUP, 1978, p. 8.
[46] See Baragwanath, W., *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Victoria, No. 14, The Ballarat Goldfield*, Melbourne, 1923; also Brough Smyth, R. *The Goldfields and Mineral Districts of Victoria*, facs. ed., Queensberry Hill Press, 1979, originally published Melbourne, Government Printer, 1869.

and range, and table land, gullies and creeks and grassy slopes, here and there black dense forest, there only sprinkled with trees ….[47]

Figure 2 Ballarat East Goldfield

[47] Withers, W.B., *A History of Ballarat from the first pastoral settlement to the present time* , 2nd Edition, Niven & Co., Ballarat, 1887, p. 9.

Yet, even whilst indigenous people moved about the land, and pastoralists cleared and farmed, the glittering prize, deep beneath its quiet 'resting place', had left clues to its existence - for those who could read them. They were to be found in the startling white reefs of quartz which stood twenty feet above the surrounding surface, in the shining micas and pebbles visible in the many watercourses of the district, and in the gleaming specks evident on the roots of shrubs and grasses displaced by wandering sheep and cattle or primitive farm buildings and shepherds' huts. Strangely, the initial rush from Geelong to Buninyong petered out, and hopeful seekers, starting to make the connection, spread out across the surrounding land. But it was not until late August, 1851, that young James Regan, with his partner John Dunlop, discovered gold at Ballarat's Golden Point, and started the rush to unlock the secrets of one of the richest alluvial goldfields in the world.

The presence of gold was one of the most formative factors in the shaping of the kind of society which eventually emerged in Ballarat. Gold determined the kinds of people who travelled to the region from all parts of the globe, since its appeal was particularly to those who needed to seek a new life free of the economic and social limitations of traditional European hierarchies. This is not to claim a uniformity or sameness for the types of migrants who were attracted to the goldfields, but to articulate the fact that the presence of gold was the common, underlying catalyst which triggered the migrant surge.

Similarly, it was gold which informed the constant battle to wrest the wealth from the soil, and it was the manner of its distribution which determined the nature and phasing of the mining (that is, from alluvial, to deep lead, to quartz). It was gold which identified where people lived, and the manner in which they lived. For example, early street plans of Ballarat demonstrate the manner in which dwellings, shops, roads, and even industries grew, Topsy-like, at the behest of potential gold-bearing ground.

Above all, it was gold which informed the nature of the development of migrants' attitude towards the land - as something to be tamed, battled with, puzzled over, engaged in all manner of ways, both spiritual and physical. Gold was the factor which separated settlements like Ballarat from others, and it was its lack or continuation thereof which determined the ongoing presence of such settlements. Where the gold ran out, the *raison d'etre* of the town or settlement disappeared, and so, generally, did the town. Gold, and its precious and globally recognised value, gave to the diggers that sense of a future so necessary for the growth of any society.

The thesis chooses to focus on the four major Celtic groups - the Cornish, the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish - for several reasons. Together, they are a significant group of immigrants in Ballarat, second only to the English.[48] On a separate level, the presence of the Celts as immigrants is enormously influential; their 'ethnic identities', strongly rooted in a long and distinguished heritage, were retained and reproduced in Ballarat. The thesis

[48] See Table 1.

charts this retention and reproduction, as well as the inevitable process of historical change, dilution and adaptation which occurred.[49]

Ballarat on the eve of gold discovery was a quiet, pastoral settlement, grassy and well timbered. Pre-gold population figures are difficult to estimate, but the overall figures for Victoria were measured at 77,000. On Ballarat in

Figure 3. Pre gold Ballarat

[49] See Dixson, Miriam, *The Imaginary Australian Anglo-Celts and Identity - 1788 to the present,* UNSW Press, Sydney, 1999, p.180, Footnote 39.

October 1851, the first available goldfields figures estimate the digging population at 6000, with a dramatic decrease to 300 in December, when the diggers surged to Castlemaine and Bendigo. Prior to gold, a sprinkling of pastoralists had taken up runs in and around the Buninyong and Ballarat area. By 1840, all the land around Ballarat had been occupied, and by 1846, the areas to the east and north had also been taken up. The Yuille cousins had taken up the land around what is now known as Black Hill, as well as other areas, including the northerly segment around Wendouree - which became known as Yuille's Swamp, and later, Lake Wendouree.[50] Bate estimates that within a fifteen mile radius of Yuille's Ballarat run there were about twenty stations. Withers, Ballarat's nineteenth century historian, describes the area as possessing a 'pastoral quiet' which "reigned everywhere".[51] It was a "pleasantly picturesque pastoral country" over which could be found "nothing of civilisation but a few pastoral settlers and their retinue - the occasional flock of nibbling sheep, or groups of cattle browsing in the broad

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[50] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City*, 1978, p. 2.
[51] Withers, p. 8.

herbage".[52] Withers, in true nineteenth century style, took little account of the indigenous inhabitants, other than to briefly acknowledge their existence. In his very Victorian scheme of things, Aborigines, kangaroos, and bullock teams, ambled equably across his sylvan landscape. Weston Bate treats the subject with far greater sensitivity, and acknowledges the one-sided interpretation given in earlier accounts,[53] and the cultural tragedy which the coming of white 'civilisation' prefigured.

It is, in fact, quite difficult to ascertain the numbers of Aboriginal people in evidence in this pre-gold era. Ballarat was the home of the Wathaurung people, and the district was relatively heavily settled in aboriginal terms.[54] Illness, dislocation and sporadic warfare quickly reduced the population, and by the time of the discovery of gold, most of the indigenous peoples of the area could be located on Protectorates, or settled on stations which provided work and a refuge for them. Earliest census figures (1851) do not even include Aboriginal people in their totals - which fact probably speaks more loudly than anything about the position of these people in a land which for centuries had been their own on which to wander at will, but which, with the discovery of gold, was to become a melting pot of race and creed, and a monument to Mammon. In the story which would be told about Ballarat, there would be no role for the Aboriginal person.

The thesis, then, demonstrates some aspects of the multi-layered nature of Ballarat society in the last fifty years of the nineteenth century. It is concerned with understanding the process by which those migrants from the so-called

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[52] Withers, p.8.
[53] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City,* 1978, pp. 2-4.
[54] Clark, I, *That's My Country Belonging to Me,* Heritage Matters, Beaconsfield, (Victoria), 1998.

Celtic communities of Great Britain moved physically and mentally from the security of their rich and ancient cultural heritage to embrace a changed self-image.

The thesis consists of five substantive chapters. Chapter One sets the scene for Federation in Ballarat, in 1901, giving the reader some idea of the way in which Ballarat greeted the new nation and the new century. The four Celtic groups are then examined in turn; the logic of the order is decided by the extent and speed with which each group divested itself of its relationship with the Mother Country, and concomitant notions of kinship and commitment therewith. A chapter on the Cornish (Chapter Two) is followed by one on the Welsh, (Chapter Three), the Scottish, (Chapter Four), a chapter on the Irish (Chapter Five) concluding the quartet.

Chapter One presents the reader with an image of Ballarat as Federation Day - and the new century - dawned in January, 1901. A short account of the referenda process which had resulted in Ballarat's astonishing 96.7% vote in favour of Federation is also included. Chapters Two to Five briefly examine the relevant cultural and historical backgrounds of the individual Celtic groups. Knowledge of the strength and vigour of these Celtic cultures permits an understanding of the baggage which travelled with each group to the New World - and, more specifically, which helped to shape the growth and development of the goldfields city of Ballarat.

Chapter Two, on the Cornish, identifies the vigour and intensity of their Methodism, as well as their innovative mining techniques, and argues that both this expertise, plus the broader aspects of Cornish culture and sociability left an indelible imprint on the development of Ballarat.

The strength of the Welsh intellectual heritage informed their particular impact on Ballarat, and was made manifest in the creation and presentation of the eisteddfod tradition in Ballarat, discussed in detail in Chapter Three. As well, the Welsh, with the Cornish, were resolute in their unwavering loyalty to the Methodist cause as it evolved in the new society.

Chapter Four, on the emigrants from Scotland, explores the manner in which Scottish determination to improve their economic position was able to be carefully and successfully applied within the new and rapidly evolving Ballarat goldfields society. This chapter will demonstrate that the Scots of Ballarat, the 'builders and beautifiers', were important for the subtle success of their business acumen, and the role which this played in advancing the nationally recognised importance and wealth of the city. The more overt representation of this success is evident in the pride, and the pragmatic Presbyterianism, with which they adorned Ballarat with the solid beauty of statues and churches. In this alone, the chapter argues, they may lay claim to be significant contributors to the image of 'Ballarat the Beautiful', and successful, which so impressed visitors to the city in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century.

The Irish chapter, Chapter Five, acknowledges the primary importance of this national group as the most numerically significant of the four migrating Celtic nations. The chapter argues that the potent Catholicism of the Irish impacted significantly on both the physical and spiritual formation of Ballarat society; that the all-embracing and poignantly bitter-sweet cultural and religious legacy of the Irish, carried with them to Ballarat, invested most aspects of life in the city. The many expectations and prejudices of a people historically

dogged by poverty and religious persecution manifested themselves in the social, political and religious institutions of Ballarat, yet the chapter will also contend that, despite the transportation and realisation of many of these inherited frustrations in their Ballarat lives, many of the Irish of Ballarat were able to rise above such limiting perspectives and find in the new society the opportunity to contribute at the highest political, economic and social levels, to the elevation of the city of Ballarat as the "first and greatest' of Australia's golden cities.[55]

It becomes evident throughout the study that the fading nationalism of the Celtic groups is inextricably linked with a growing pride in Ballarat, their adopted city. As generation succeeded generation, the memory of the Mother Country diminished, and loyalty to a 'new Britannia' became more realistic. As well, the efforts of individual Celtic groups to proliferate their culture, and their readiness to sacrifice purity of tradition for the perceived gains of a wider cultural appeal, ironically, diminished the separateness of their identities.

Cross cultural activity, as well as the emergence of a unifying pride in Ballarat, linked these often disparate Celtic groups together until, at the end of the century, they were less of Cornwall, Wales, Scotland or Ireland than they were of Ballarat - or even, perhaps, of Australia.

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[55] Withers, p. 327.

Figure 4 Digging at Ballarat

CHAPTER

1

Federation

"To Ballarat is largely due the question of Federation."
J.L. Purves, speaking at a meeting of the Eastern Branch of the ANA, in Ballarat, on the evening of 21 June, 1898.[1]

The ushering in of the new Commonwealth in Ballarat was a magnificent opportunity for Ballarat citizens to indulge in every conceivable kind of imperial hyperbole, nationalist rhetoric, and sheer unbridled sentiment.

The 31 December, 1900 was a warm, clear night in Ballarat, which augured well for the celebrations to come. The whole city was alert with expectation - as much, it should probably be said, in anticipation of a good night out as anything else. New Year's Eve is ever a time for partying, and tonight Ballarat, along with the rest of the country, was planning the party of a lifetime: the ushering in of the new century, as well as the birth of the Australian Commonwealth. The *Courier* was alive to the momentousness of the occasion:

> No other generation but this will stand at the point where the nation's begetting ended and its birth began, the point where the closing decades of one century led up their harvest of federal endeavours to be garnered in the safe treasure house of the Commonwealth at the

[1] *Courier,* 22 June, 1898.

> opening of the gates of a new century. A new century, a new nation, new ambitions, new duties, new hopes, all bursting into young virginal life out of that close-clinging past where the nation's germinal conditions were so sedulously shaped, through years of patriotic labour, by the true federal sons of the soil.[2]

The city dressed up for the occasion: from early evening, the whole place was thronged with people, milling about in an apparently aimless fashion, waiting for something to happen. The crowd tended to congregate at the centre of the city, where the most brilliant illuminations could be witnessed. The Ballarat city fathers had done the city proud, and people gazed in a mixture of wonderment and pride at the glories of the City Hall, from which blazed the magnificent inevitability of "God Save the Queen", whilst streams of flame "waned and waxed as the breeze played through them."[3]

Across Queen Victoria Square, the Post Office and public buildings were also wreathed in light, with stars and crescents shining out in "burning yellow flame" and the whole bathing the excited crowd in a blaze of light. Further up Lydiard Street, night had turned into day; the *Courier*, fondly remembering the celebrations at the relief of Mafeking, was pleased to report that the block of street between the George Hotel and the Commercial Club and the Mining Exchange was "as bright as noonday … one of the brightest spots in the city at Mafeking time, and it was as bright on the eve of the nation's birth."[4]

Ballarat was agog. The Ballarat East Town Hall was vividly illuminated, and the view from the intersection of Dana and Lydiard streets was deemed "wonderfully pretty."[5] The fire brigade station flaunted "a gaudy star of

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[2] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[3] *Courier*, 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[4] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[5] *Courier*, 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

running lines of fire," whilst, not to be outdone, the leading business houses had hung out strings of lanterns or lit flames of glowing decorations. Fireworks of every imaginable hue and description were fired from balconies, the Town Hall gardens, and Queen Victoria square … however, the city worthies had clearly taken precautions against over-enthusiastic citizens, for the pedestal of the queen's statue (which had previously been the victim of vandalism) had been "swathed with drapery as a means of protection against the mischievousness of young hoodlums, which would possibly be effervescing on such a unique occasion".[6]

The retail merchants of Ballarat were not going to let such an opportunity slip by: Harry Davies and Company (Ballarat Clothes Emporium) proudly pronounced themselves "For Empire", whilst Green's Co – Operative Coupon glibly advertised their "famous and popular" product as for "One People One Destiny One Coupon". Lester's Hotel made a special effort, with "as pretty a window illumination as one could wish to see. " All the many windows of this big three-storey building glowed with fairy lights, "whose steady subdued radiance was in contrast to the coming and going of the glaring gas lines in the street further down."[7]

But it was the Wasteland-like thronging of the crowd up Bridge St., and into Sturt St. which captured the *Courier's* imagination: it was like "a great human artery" flowing up and down the roads, thronging across the pavements, and reaching a peak at around 11pm, as they gathered for the final celebrations at the Galloway Monument:

> Young and old, men who reached back almost to the 18th century, and toddlers who may see the waning of the 20th, walked side by side,

[6] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[7] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

> looking on the demonstration that marked the coming of the nation of which they were the pioneers and the inheritors. … Stalwart miners from the Glenfine group met old mates holidaymaking from the Golden West or "outlawed" though only for a little time from South Africa. Old men who knew Serjeant's Freehold, and the old Hallelujah when the century was in its adolescence walked side by side with "youngsters" who had ranged the world from the Klondike to the Rand. …the Old Colonists Association, and the Australian Natives Association, and the Victorian Natives, the old and the young, took equal part in the demonstration.[8]

For the enthusiastic crowds gathering at the Eastern Oval, a selection of entertainments were provided; these were preceded by the delivery of a piece of verse, especially composed for the occasion by Mr. J. G. Reilly, and recited by Mr. Dunne, appropriately attired in what the *Courier* described as "patriotic costume":

> *The Gates of the Nation Swing Back*
> Begotten of Valour and Daring,
> The spirit of Union am I,
> And the temples and shrines of my people
> Are piercing the vault of the sky.
> But the gates have been closed through the ages,
> And the wonderful realms within,
> Have never been seen by poor mortals,
> But tonight they all enter in.
> They have lingered awhile near its portals,
> Till the night and the hour had come;
> And thy people should pass through in triumph
> To the soul-stirring roll of the drum.
> The first stroke of midnight has sounded,
> And the gates of the nation swing back;
> A vagrant star crosses the heaven,
> And leaves a bright flame in its track.
> 'Tis an omen; the heavens bear witness
> And blazon its sign in the skies
> That as long as the stars shine, thy people

[8] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

Shall work out their own destinies.
And the children of Valour and Daring
Troop in like the waves on the shore,
While anthems of praise are ascending
To be echoed and sung evermore.
Yea, tonight, and forever and ever,
As long, Lord, as thou shall ordain,
Thy people shall love and revere Thee,
Till dust shall go dustward again.[9]

The tone of the proceedings at the Oval was definitely raised by the sincere rendition of these sentiments; what followed might have been seen as something of an anti-climax, but it seems that the Ballarat crowd were ready for anything - even a performance by trained police horses, and the execution by Professor Lillian (the Australian Blondin) of a wonderful double somersault in mid-air![10] One might seriously question the appropriateness of such an antic, but perhaps this was felt to be the most apt expression of the mood of the citizens of Ballarat on this momentous occasion.

A procession was formed at around 11pm, and in the charge of Colonel Sleep, the massed bands and the Orphanage children marched bravely in line, and after a circuit of the main streets, halted at the Galloway monument.[11] The bandsmen paraded Peel, Bridge, and Sturt Streets, playing lively airs, and when they at length came to rest, the crowd had swollen to giant proportions, extending almost from Grenville St. to Albert Street. Several Ballarat worthies were waiting on the balcony of J. M. Kline's establishment to officiate: Cr. C.C. Shoppee, chairman of the Celebration Committee, as well as ex-Mayor Heinz (representing Mayor Whykes, who was in Sydney attending the

[9] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[10] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[11] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

grander celebrations there[12]). Representatives from all the major churches in Ballarat were in attendance, as well as those councillors unfortunate enough to have been left out of the Sydney celebrations. Mr. Fred. Williams, President of the City Branch, Australian Natives Association, was also present.

After the appropriate Biblical references had been made, the Reverend Kirkland (Anglican Cathedral Church) offered up a prayer invoking the blessing of the Almighty upon the union of the colonies. Various sanctimonious and pious observations were made regarding the nature of the colonial union in the sight of God, and the noble and democratic manner in which this union had been achieved. All good things descended from the Almighty, and federation of the Australian colonies was no exception:

> When they thought of the advantages which the people of these colonies possessed it was right that they should render unto God praise. They should thank God for the large liberties they enjoyed, and a Government broad-based upon the people's will. We were a cosmopolitan people, and any person of good repute no matter his nationality, could achieve the highest honours. … He thanked God for the wisdom of the politicians which had resulted in the establishment of the Commonwealth.[13]

The folk of Ballarat applauded and cheered these noble sentiments - possibly more in the hope that further pronouncements would be short-lived, than because anyone was really listening. Such hope, however, was misplaced:

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[12] It was unfortunate that Ballarat's chief official could not be present that evening: in his Mayor's Report of 7th January, 1901, Mayor Whykes was only marginally regretful that he had missed the opportunity, preferring to invoke the envy of his fellow councillors (not to mention the frustration of future historians!) by describing at length the nature of the lavish festivities held in Sydney, and his activities therein.
See Mayor's Report**,** 7th January 1901, held in the Town Hall Archives, Ballarat.

[13] *Courier*, 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

ex- Mayor Heinz had a turn, followed by Mr. Fred Williams, for the ANA. More statements of the obvious - "the achievement of Australian federation would make such a red-letter mark on the roll of time that Australians of the present and the future would remember the dawn of the new century only as the occasion which constituted the citizens of this continent one people, one flag, and one destiny" (cheers).[14] The estimable Fred closed with Wentworth's famous lines

> May this thy last-born infant then arise
> To glad thy heart and greet thy parent eyes:
> And Australasia float, with flag unfurl'd,
> A new Britannia in another world.
> (Cheers)[15]

Further words of wisdom were offered by Mr. Henry Brand, who, as representative of the Ballarat Chamber of Commerce, had an eye to the main chance – he envisaged a wonderful new world of commercial opportunity once the artificial barriers of the colonies were washed away.

Finally, Cr. Shoppee addressed the assembled multitude, and the sentiments he uttered seemed to fairly neatly encapsulate the carefully conceived vision of Federation to which Australian citizens aspired. Cr. Shoppee's "intense satisfaction" at the birth of the Commonwealth was only exceeded by his apparent relief that, despite being now "one people", it is still a "younger race of Britons who are dwelling under the glorious Southern Cross". With no apparent sense of discrepancy, Cr. Shoppee happily tangled "imperial

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[14] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[15] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

symbolism, jingoism, and formality"[16] with local sentiments – thrilled and uplifted to contemplate the continuation of strong ties to the British Empire, and appalled at the idea that lesser mortals might wish to cut these ties:

> From now, until eternity, we are united, part and parcel of that grand empire of Britain, upon whose vast dominions the sun never ceases to shine. We are cemented by the crimson drops of blood which pulse through our veins, and while hoping that peace may for ever prevail, we are ever alert and ready to defy and resist the intrusion of Britain's enemies. I am glad to say that I have lived to see the oft-repeated expressions of cutting the painter from the Motherland die out; and thanks to such institutions as the South Street Debating Society and the Australian Natives Association "We are all for unity", and the loyalty of the native born is a realised fact.[17]

Finally, "the hour of midnight chimed": Councillor Heinz waved his little Union Jack and called for three cheers for the Commonwealth, the National Anthem was played, and was followed by the "sweetly pathetic air of 'Auld Lang Syne'", the bells rang out, and "the century and the year died out together, and with them went the colonies of Australia."[18] The crowd cheered, shook hands, and then, it seems, everyone went home. Perhaps they did not know what else to do. They were "happy and proud that they had played a part in the celebrations that inaugurated the Commonwealth", observed the *Courier*, but the air of anti-climax is unmistakable. Reconciliation of Imperial and Commonwealth loyalties appeared to be complete; time alone would tell whether the rapprochement would survive.

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[16] Irving, Helen: "A Nation in a Day: Celebrating the Inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth", Paper given at Conference on Federation, Ballarat, 30 November, 1996, p. 6.

[17] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

[18] *Courier*, 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

Fireworks provided an appropriate culmination to the feeling of happy euphoria which prevailed, although the dignity of the occasion was unwittingly lampooned when the *Courier* reported in matter-of-fact tone the near demise of several of the revellers. These folk, along with a couple of hapless cab horses, were unfortunate enough to get in the way of a rogue rocket which, with an inspired sense of occasion, refused to behave correctly and arch gracefully heavenwards, and instead "came screeching like a pom-pom shell into a crowd of persons congregated in front of the Burns statue." One can only imagine the wild scattering of spectators and horses alike as the misguided fireball plummeted earthwards. Fortunately, no-one was injured, and some members of the crowd managed, with great presence of mind, to prevent the poor terrified cab horses from bolting.[19]

At Buninyong, New Year's Eve/Commonwealth celebrations were "one of the liveliest that Buninyong [had] ever seen". [20] Despite considerable displeasure that there was not to be a late train from Ballarat to Buninyong, large crowds of people had assembled in the streets as midnight approached, and on the stroke of twelve the Buninyong Rifle Club, under Captain Lazarus, fired a royal salute of twenty-one volleys outside the Town Hall. After this, all present joined in hearty cheers for the Queen and the Commonwealth, and a large number of fireworks "of all descriptions" were fired off from one of the parapets of the Town Hall. The Crown Hotel also boasted an array of fireworks, and the church and fire bells each rang out their welcome to the new Commonwealth. . Afterwards, according to the *Telegraph*, numbers of people remained in the streets for a considerable time; like those expectant souls in Ballarat, the good people of Buninyong were all dressed up, with

[19] *Courier*, 1 January, 1901.
[20] *Buninyong Telegraph*, 4 January, 1901, p. 2.

nowhere to go. More fireworks were let off, and patriotic songs were sung, before the evening came to its somewhat inconclusive finish.[21]

Thus, amid the clamour of bellringing, and brilliance of rockets, was the 'new Britannia ' ushered in. The citizens of Ballarat, along with the citizens of the rest of the country, had experienced the transformation from "a citizen merely of a colony into a citizen of a nation."[22] Were they ready for it? They believed they were. On this day, Ballarat – golden city, lucky city, "most federal city" – stood proud and ready to "pass through in triumph, to the soul-stirring roll of the drum."

Sir John Madden, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, surely expressed the hopes and convictions of all the citizens of Ballarat when he stated:

> I will say, in wishing you and our Nation a happy new century, that if Ballarat but be to the Commonwealth what she has been to Victoria, there will never be wanting the key-note of patriotism, public spirit, and nobility, which will lead to the one grand harmony on which all our hopes are fixed.[23]

A New Day, a New Century

Federation Day - or Commonwealth Day - as it occurred in Ballarat was possibly something of an anticlimax: the relief of Mafeking (23 May, 1900) had gone before, and Ballarat had gone wild, with an outpouring of jingoistic sentiment. The streets were choked with flags and people, bands played, bells rang, and patriotic songs were sung. Pride in the prowess and achievements

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[21] *Buninyong Telegraph,* 4 January, 1901, p. 2.
[22] Irving, Helen: "A Nation in a Day…" p. 1.
[23] *Courier,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.

of local lads who had enlisted in the militia were unbounded - foreshadowing, perhaps, that sigh of relief which echoed throughout the continent after the landing at Gallipoli. The *Courier* itself promoted and encouraged the myth-making process, speaking of... "warm blood poured out on kopje and veldt … cementing the foundation of empire …. The blood of brothers from all parts under one old flag."[24] In what Weston Bate describes as a truly wonderful coincidence, the day after Mafeking's relief was the Queen's Birthday; this auspicious date had been chosen by the City fathers as the day for unveiling the white marble statue of Her Majesty.[25] The *Courier* came out in a special edition, printed in gold, with red, white and blue borders, and the flood of Imperial sentimentality which was released on this day left little room for any further revelations regarding the advent of Federation. And yet - celebrate they did.

Imagine Ballarat at dawn, on 1 January, 1901. First light strikes the spire of the Town Hall in Sturt Street, and touches the faces of the shops and buildings of that great and wide boulevard of wealth and prosperity. Echoes of the previous night's celebrations linger on the still morning air, and the occasional early-rising dog, seeking a convenient lamp post, picks its way delicately through the debris left by crowds of revellers. A couple of cats slink around the base of the Burns statue, intent on breakfast, whilst a slight breeze stirs the red, white and blue bunting erected the previous evening. The fairy lights and flaming stars are dimmed, and lanterns hang dull and lifeless from the large stores. Further to the north-west, peaceful ripples lap the waters of 'matchless' Wendouree's shores, and the sedate and dignified glide of a pair of black swans barely causes a ripple across the lake's glossy surface. Mist clings daintily to the skirts of Buninyong and Warrenheip, and, like Dickens'

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[24] *Courier,* 25th May, 1900, p. 1.
[25] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City*, 1978, p. 254.

fog of old Chancery, wreaths itself mysteriously round those sentinels of Ballarat's wealth, the mine poppet heads. Churches, ovals, racecourses, lakes, theatres and gardens lay prepared and waiting for the soon to be assembled hordes that would descend later in the day.

Ballarat and district was going to enjoy itself. Federation might – and did – inspire all manner of patriotic sentiments, and noble aspirations, but the people of Ballarat fully intended to have a good time – and clearly believed that it was possible to embrace both options.

Ballarat's Federation celebrations were certainly firmly based in Imperial sentiment: as Helen Irving and Stephen Alomes have identified, "pride in being Australian came partly from being part of the great British race, which had created the greatest Empire the world had ever seen"[26] and

> lacking the imperatives of rigid class distinction, and of the strong religious or folk traditions that gave meaning to the ritual reversals and "craziness" of the European and Latin carnival traditions, Australia in 1901 … simply borrowed from British forms of ceremony and celebration.[27]

Ballarat, already strongly identified in its own right with the achievement of Federation, was very keen from the outset to celebrate in its own way. Was this the Australian way, or the Ballarat way? Nobody formally or clearly understood those terms in 1901, but the day was certainly planned to fit in with the climate and expectations of the citizens of the new nation. The

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[26] Alomes, Stephen: *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism, 1880 – 1988,* Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, Sydney, New South Wales, 1988.
[27] Alomes, Stephen, "Parades of Meaning," *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 17, 1985

previous evening had seen the expected conventions of political formality observed. The ceremony was over; now they were going to enjoy themselves.

Special trains were organised for the day, and listed in the *Courier.* At the Eastern Oval, scene of the previous evening's festivities, a sports day was held from 1.00pm. All kinds of inventive activities were held, including a two mile wheel race, an international scratch, local championships, second and third class handicaps. The district, too, was celebrating. At Burrumbeet, there were ladies' bicycles races, a tug of war, the greasy pig, horse and pony races, a publican's booth, a refreshment stall, whilst Prout's band entertained picnickers. There were races at Terang, Beaufort, and Lal Lal, Highland Games at Maryborough, a Demonstration at Carngham in aid of the Widows' and Orphans' Funds, the Valdanes, trick cyclists and acrobats, at the Mechanics Institute, the Pleasant St. Wesleyan Sunday School's Annual Picnic was held at Burrumbeet Park, and at Her Majesty's Theatre Miss Maud Williamson appeared in the premiere of "*Barrabas*". In what would later be recognised as a typically 'Australian' feature, a special arrangement had been made with the Lal Lal Turf Club for the performance to begin at 8.15p.m. to accommodate late arrivals from the races.

As Commonwealth Day dawned bright and clear in Buninyong, the "Ancient Village", was not to be outdone by its larger, brasher neighbour, and boasted a bold display of flags and bunting in the "bonny red, white and blue". People crowded into the gardens, and at the races, gathering to make the most of the perfect summer weather. Australian summer weather, however, can be fickle. Celebrations came to an abrupt end at three o'clock, when a large thunderstorm centred overhead, and drenched the assembled multitudes. The *Telegraph* paints a dismal picture:

> It was a pitiable sight to see crowds of people standing about in the reserves behind trees and fences, and c. [etcetera] in search of a dry spot and then after getting well wetted wending their way either homeward or to the station. [28]

And then, while Ballarat and the rest of the new nation waited, almost with bated breath, for the first 'real' Australia Day on 26th January, 1901, the blessed lady herself, mother of the Empire, "symbol … of British power and piety"[29] , died. Planned celebrations by the Australian Natives Association (mostly in the form of the popular outdoors picnic) for 'Australia Day' on the 26th January were destroyed by this somewhat inconsiderate, if not entirely unexpected, death four days earlier. The event plunged the whole Empire into mourning, and definitely placed a damper on Australia Day revels. Ballarat's grief was immense: the bells tolled, flags were lowered to half-mast, and all public offices were closed. Next day, newspapers appeared with thick black lines of mourning, and front page pictures of the beloved Queen after whom the state was named. The Queen's statue in Sturt Street was draped in black, as was every statue of the deceased monarch, and every public building throughout Australia.[30] Commemoration services took the place of community picnics, and the inauguration of the Commonwealth was uncomfortably and almost unobtrusively sandwiched in between these hugely nationalistic occurrences.

As well, for Federation itself, the nation was more clearly focussed on Sydney; Ballarat's own mayor travelled to Sydney to take part, and in his report to the City, seemed far more interested in detailing the glories of the event up north, than in hearing about the happenings in his own city.

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[28] *Buninyong Telegraph*, 4 January, 1901, p. 1.
[29] *Buninyong Telegraph,* 4 January, 1901, p. 1.

"Anything taken up by the Citizens of Ballarat is always accomplished with enthusiasm," he reported, "and the occasion under review was no exception." Mayor Whykes then passed quickly on to the more important and exciting events of the Sydney revels:

> Those councillors who were privileged [sic] to be present at the Festivities in Sydney will remember with pride the programme so lavishly arranged by the New South Wales Government to mark the birth of the greatest Nation of the Southern Seas, Australia. The Swearing - in Ceremony and Grand Procession held the premier place and was indeed a magnificent spectacle, which will be long remembered by those who witnessed it.[31]

Mayor Whykes gleefully detailed to other, less fortunate councillors the catalogue of events in which he participated:

> Numerous other invitations were received for Excursions, concerts, carnivals, & c. and were freely availed of by those fortunate enough to be the recipients. … it was a matter for congratulation that Councillors fared so well. The illuminations on New Year's Night were on a scale unequalled by anything previously attempted and presented a brilliant appearance, the line of march being spanned by eight beautifully designed, decorated, and illuminated Arches representing all Nations.[32]

The Mayor, verging perilously on sounding like a country mouse in the city, spoke in awe of the "many attractive resorts" in and around Sydney, and the City's "abundant" electric, cable and steam tramways; it is clear that the

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[30] Sunter, Anne Beggs, "A Right Royal Celebration", Conference Proceedings, *Towards a Centenary of Federation*, November, 1996, p. 19.
[31] Mayor's Report, 7 January, 1901, Ballarat Town Hall Archives.
[32] Mayor's Report, 7 January, 1901, Ballarat Town Hall Archives.

happenings in Ballarat were accorded a fairly minor placing in Mayor Whykes' great scheme of Federation happenings.[33]

Thus ended the physical celebrations of what the *Ballarat Star* called the "peaceful triumph of Australian Federation"[34].

The reason for Ballarat's strong vote and enthusiastic celebrations can be sought in part, in a more parochial loyalty. The Ballarat people probably sensed that Federal power would bring a new player into the field to buffer Ballarat against Melbourne: Ballarat's resource-based economy had waned (like Bendigo's) after the 1870s, as the profitability of the goldmines decreased, whereas "Marvellous Melbourne" was booming, and was perceived as Ballarat's natural enemy. The movement to promote Ballarat as the national capital was a direct off-shoot of this perception, and although it must be said that the city was not alone in its belief that it should be the new capital,[35] it is certain that the Ballarat press and the Ballarat people firmly believed that this was a real option, and proffered it to the rest of the country as such.

The presentation of the image of Ballarat as the national capital climaxed when delegates at the Constitutional Convention in February, 1898 visited the city to escape the heat of Melbourne over the weekend. Ballarat took the opportunity very seriously, and vigorously promoted itself as a favourable

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[33] Mayor's Report, 7 January, 1901, Ballarat Town Hall Archives.
[34] *Ballarat Star*, 1 January 1901, Editorial, p. 2.
[35] Mt. Gambier, and St. Kilda, were among others who coveted the honour.

site, despite more general and considered opinion that the whole idea should be viewed as a joke:

> the spirit in which many of the federal delegates to the 1898 Constitutional Convention in Melbourne [were] inclined to regard the aspirations of Ballarat to become the capital of the prospective Commonwealth [was] by no means felt as a discouragement in that city. The matter [had] been treated as a joke, but Ballarat refuse[d] to see the joke or to allow its claims to be advanced in the facetious insincerity resorted to in support of the qualifications of St. Kilda, Mount Gambier and Albury - or even Wentworth or Hobart.[36]

Despite the blistering heat (as bad in Ballarat as in Melbourne), Ballarat went to immense trouble to welcome the delegates and impress them with the suitability of the city for a life of Federal glory. They were very coy about directly mentioning the subject of 'national capital', feeling that it would not, perhaps, be quite seemly. Those welcoming the delegates, therefore, and escorting them around Ballarat abstained, in most laudable (according to the *Courier*) fashion, from referring to the city's claim.

> It is gratifying to be able to note that, excepting in the cases of a few individuals, the subject of the Federal capital was not obtruded upon the visitors. That this district has advantages giving it a claim upon the attention of those who may yet have to select a site for a Federal capital, everyone knows. But to thrust the subject upon the notice of those who, in good faith, came to Ballarat in response to a hospitable and cordial invitation, would have been very bad taste - and poor judgement.[37]

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[36]Melbourne *Age*, 14 February 1898, "Federation and Fizz: The Delegates at Ballarat".
[37] *Ballarat Courier,* 14 February 1898.

However, despite these claims of tactful abstention, Ballarat was not at all shy about feting the delegates in every other conceivable way, and the programme and the decorations must have been somewhat overwhelming for the rather stunned delegates. The *Courier* reported a daunting list of activities, including a formal "Address" at the front of the City Hall, followed by a "Pleasant Morning Drive", which carried all two hundred and fifty delegates up Sturt Street to the Park, through the Botanical Gardens and round the Lake, ending at Bridge Street, where the Ballarat East contingent took over proceedings. Visits to the Orphan Asylum, the (East) Town Hall and gardens followed. A trip down some of the mines at Sebastopol had been scheduled, but delegates professed no enthusiasm for such an excursion, having apparently visited many mines before. Luncheon was next on the agenda, followed by a trip across the Lake and a garden party in the gardens. The prospect of a cruise was tempting to most of the delegates, and the two largest steamers of the Golden City Steamboat Company departed with a full complement of delegates, including all the Premiers. The boats made heavy weather of the crossing, hampered by the southerly buster which had blown up, as well as by the unfortunate fact that 'matchless Wendouree' was little more than a puddle, with some parts only containing about two and a half feet of water! Somehow the little flotilla made it to the other side, serenaded by the "lively airs" played by the 3rd Battalion Band, which was located on an accompanying vessel. Sadly, the same could not be said of a display put on by the Ballarat Yacht Club: of the four boats which turned out, only one made it to the other side, with the other three capsizing. The crews walked home.

The delights of the gardens, the Statuary, the fernery, and the maze completed the tour. Here, in a less than subtle departure from that tact of which the *Courier* had been so proud, a monumental floral arrangement proclaiming "Ballarat, the Federal Capital" confronted the visitors. Afternoon tea

followed. An evening drive through the town was scheduled but cancelled because of the gusty winds which hurled dust around the town and played havoc with the illuminated decorations. Yet another reception ended the visit, and the exhausted delegates were sent back to Melbourne on two trains at 8.45pm. Ballarat as the national capital was clearly very much on the minds, if not the lips, of its residents.

This was so much the case that the *Star* saw fit to make editorial comment regarding the issue on Federation Day, in 1901. The paper prefaced its enthusiastic reporting of the previous evening's happenings with a very pointed comment about Sydney's usurpation of what had been seen as Ballarat's destiny:

> When federation was first seized upon, the claims of Ballarat to selection as the Federal capital were so generally recognised that they aroused the parochial spirit in Sydney. The then Premier of the mother colony - Mr. G.H. Reid - saw the danger, and a little political jugglery hoodwinked Sir George Turner, with the result that an arrangement was arrived at by which the Commonwealth lost and New South Wales gained.[38]

The *Star*, however, claimed for Ballarat a loftier outlook - Ballarat citizens, it stated, were able to rise above such parochial concerns and welcome the Commonwealth unreservedly:

> This fact, however, was lost sight of last night, and in no place in Australia were the jubilations at our entrance into national life more real or heartfelt than in Ballarat. ... the rejoicing was in all cases genuine.[39]

Federation for Ballarat was a pragmatic solution to what had long been perceived as a potentially difficult situation, and in the events leading up to the much-vaunted ballot on the Commonwealth Bill in June 1898 it is possible to gain a picture of what a unified nation might mean for this self-styled "most federal city".

In May, 1898, thousands gathered in the Alfred Hall to hear Deakin and other Federation worthies espouse the positive aspects of the Commonwealth Bill. Deakin's long list of advantages clearly indicated that he saw no problem in presenting even the most prosaic of them to the many already strongly pro-Federation residents of Ballarat. Colonial trade barriers, he claimed, particularly the boot market, were a huge impost on all colonies:

> A free market in all the colonies, and protection against the outside world, would prove a tremendous boon to the whole of Australia. (Applause). Interest on loans from the "disunited body" of the colonies was a heavy burden on the taxpayer which, with Federation, would be removed ... a saving in this direction alone of a million or a million and a half.[40]

The abolition of inter-state commission on the Riverina trade was also put forward as a positive aspect. Deakin's advocacy of the limited powers of the popularly elected Senate seemed to draw much appreciation from the Ballarat audience.

> The proposed Australian Senate was the only one in the world that could be dissolved and sent back to the people. (Cheers) … and …

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[38] *Ballarat Star*, 1 January, 1901, p.4.
[39] *Ballarat Star,* 1 January, 1901, p.4.
[40] *Courier*, 21 May, 1898, p. 2.

> they would be almost as subject to the electors as the members of the House of Representatives. (Applause)[41]

Finally, Deakin exhorted the crowds not to forget that the constitution represented a bargain by the states. "It was the people who made this constitution, and only the people should be able to unmake it."[42]

On the evening before the ballot a crowded meeting was held at the Trades Hall in Ballarat, wherein Messrs. Higgins (one of the Convention delegates) and Barrett (Secretary of the Melbourne Trades and Labour Council) addressed a decidedly pro-Federation gathering. They had their work cut out for them.

… "almost before [Mr. Barrett] had commenced to address them there was considerable disorder at the back of the hall." Mr. Barrett hoped audibly that they had not come there to act like buffoons, at which the audience immediately - if somewhat inappropriately - applauded. The Chairman had a difficult job of it, and early on in the proceeding called for a fair hearing ….. "Let it be said," he pleaded desperately, "that the people of Ballarat listened first and spoke afterwards." His plea was in vain. Cries of "Make a little more room on the platform", "Speak for yourself", "What do you know about it?" and "We don't want to know what he said" as well as constant jeers, cheers and interruptions made the speaker's task an impossible one. Barrett was clearly frustrated, and could find no point of agreement with the rowdy pro-Federation Ballaratians; coming to the money question, he claimed that the Senate had been given co-ordinate powers, which was "partly, if not wholly, a copy of the American constitution with all its defects." This caused

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[41] *Courier,* 21 May, 1898, p. 2.
[42] *Courier,* 21 May, 1898, p. 2.

a storm of protest, with a great cry of "NO" and "We can alter that". "Considerable interruption" was then caused by someone apparently known to the crowd as "Billy Jones" who made his way to the platform , and tried to ascend it. Despite cries of "Sit down", Mr. Barrett attempted to continue his remarks, but then "decided disorder" set in, with Mr. Jones and his cohorts being exceedingly noisy until someone handed him a chair, whereupon he sat on it and was quiet. Mr. Barrett proceeded once more, but the audience again became restive, and was not at all impressed by his veiled threat to say what he had to say "if he stopped till twelve o'clock." After being told to "Sit down and let the other man have a show", Barrett wound up his argument by exhorting his audience to realise what they were doing before they recorded their vote. Amidst ironical cheers, applause and counter demonstrations the poor man finally sat down.

Henry Bourne Higgins fared little better. Billy Jones continued to make a nuisance of himself, actually succeeding this time in getting up onto the speakers' platform. After order was restored yet again, Higgins pleaded a weak voice, and craved the audience's indulgence. It is unlikely that he held out much hope of receiving it, if his next statement is any guide. He immediately identified this week as the most critical in Australia's history, and told the audience that he had been warned not to come to Ballarat, "as the people were ten to one for the bill". Cries of "So we are" resounded. Like a red rag to a bull, the reckless Mr. Higgins ploughed on, daring to suggest that the reason that Ballarat folk were thus aligned was that "the bait held out to them was the hope of the Federal capital". Were Ballarat men, or their sons, being duped to accept a constitution in this way? Mr. Higgins hoped not - he would be "greatly disappointed" if this was so. Preparing to develop this point at some length, he was interrupted yet again by a cry of "Get on with Federation; you are wasting time." Fortunately, a sense of humour prevailed

in the hall when the speaker expressed his honest opinion that "Ballarat had no more chance of being the capital of Australia than of being the capital of Russia" - and the audience merely applauded and laughed. Higgins took a somewhat more conciliatory approach towards the crowd, and maintained that he was, in a sense, merely trying to serve the role of devil's advocate - having been a Convention delegate, he felt morally obliged to use his own judgement, and report honestly on the situation as he saw it. He did not believe that federation was needed to unite the country ("They were already one people and did not want any bill to federate them"). He accused the bill of being "provincial", and then proceeded to criticise it in detail, looking at tariffs (a loss of income to Victoria of approximately £600,000 a year), taxation, equal representation, loss of states' rights, and more claims of provincialism. (Applause and laughter). Higgins retired amidst an appeal for sympathy - not for the anti-Billites the luxury of rhetoric and sentimentalism; their way was the difficult way, because they were pursuing the path of duty. … "He and those with him pulled the hard oar, for they could not speak of the "glorious Southern Cross" [constellation] and use other high-flown language, but he and those with him took the part they did from a mere sense of duty."[43]

Perhaps the digs at provincialism and Ballarat's national capital expectations went home; certainly, Mr. Higgins' address was received with more attention, and amidst a less frenzied atmosphere than his more unfortunate colleague.

The meeting closed with an amendment "That the meeting expresses its approval of the constitution, and pledged themselves to vote for it", which was carried by a vote of between four and five to one. Three cheers for

[43] *Courier,* 21 May, 1898, p. 2.

Federation must have finally convinced Messrs. Barrett and Higgins that Ballarat was indeed a lost cause.[44] Buffoonery, provincialism, and rowdiness notwithstanding, Ballarat clearly felt itself to be a city strongly supporting Federation. On the eve of the ballot, hardy Ballarat Federation supporters held an open-air meeting, at which several speakers addressed the members of the Ballarat branch of the Federation League. Despite the cold and wintry weather, a good crowd turned out, and a warm reception was given to the speakers, who included the Hon. R.W. Best, Commissioner of Trades and Customs, Mr. R. M'Gregor, M.L.A, the Hon. R.T. Vale, Mr. J.W. Kirton, and Mr. A.M. David, Secretary of the Ballarat branch of the Federal League. The meeting was introduced by Newton Wanliss.

Those who attended the meeting gathered in a chilly huddle outside Judd's Unicorn Hotel; whilst waiting for the speakers, they were entertained by the members of Bulch's band playing selections of music. The speakers fared slightly better than their shivering audience, for they were at least able to address their audience from the basic shelter of the hotel balcony.

The meeting sounded a note of confidence that Ballarat voters would do the right thing and vote for Federation. The Hon. R. T. Vale said that "the majority of the electors in Ballarat were tried men, and he was sure that they would give their vote in the right direction when they were asked under what constitution they desired to live. He was sure that nine out of ten electors would vote in favour of the establishment of a united Australia." Similarly, Mr. R M'Gregor, M.L.A., observed that "the electors of Ballarat should show by their vote that they took a great interest in the subject of Federation, and he hoped that the poll here would be the heaviest taken in the colony, showing

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[44] *Courier,* 2 June, 1898, p. 2.

that Ballarat was thoroughly in favour of the bill." Further exhortation established the prospective Ballarat vote on an even higher plane, placing fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the Ballarat voter the decision on "whether they would remain isolated, or whether they would be fused into one great and harmonious nation."[45] It was, perhaps, as well that the speakers were, in the main, preaching to the converted. The "strong, swirling wind" and wintry aspect of the evening would have quickly discouraged any one else.[46].

The referendum on 3 June 1898 would, it was believed, seal Ballarat's commitment to a federated Australia.

On ballot day, the *Courier* set the tone with a huge front-page spread entitled "Australia's Cause" in which the "crimson thread of kinship" was invoked, and directions were firmly supplied on how to vote YES. The poem entitled "Referendum Day" prefaced the paper's editorial on the subject - presumably especially written for the occasion, it epitomised the kind of sentimental nationalism which the Federation issue invoked:

> The morning dawns for Federation,
> Austral sons in strength arise.
> Wave the gallant flag of union
> 'Neath our bright and sunny skies;
> Let it call each heart to union,
> Let it bid our efforts soar,
> Till the currents from our work tide
> Freely course from shore to shore.
>
> . . . . . .

[45] *Courier*, 3 June 1898, p. 2.
[46] *Courier*, 3 June, 1898, p. 2.

Till mankind behold the dawning
Of a federated world,
Rising from our free-born union,
Austral flag by Thee unfurled.[47]

On 3 June, Ballarat federation enthusiasts would have watched in vain for those 'bright and sunny skies", since the weather, in the best Ballarat tradition, was appalling. It rained solidly all day, and "Austral's flag" fluttering at the dawn of the 'federated world" would have been a little soggy. Nevertheless, the sentiments thus expressed were clearly felt to address the spirit, if not the letter, of the occasion.

Federationists and ANA members were out in force on voting day, and arrangements had been made to assist the public in gaining access to the polling booths. Every effort was made to convince people to make their vote. At the Ballarat West polling booth, the Federal League had a large marquee erected on a vacant block of land opposite the school, and from this location they masterminded their programme to 'encourage' those who planned not to vote. Owners of vehicles, or persons who were willing to pay for the hire of the same, gathered at the marquee - bringing with them any flags or bunting which could be used to decorate the city - and were sent off in all directions to remind electors to record votes. "In some instances, voters who could not walk well, were brought to the booths in cabs and other vehicles. "[48] Volunteers manned the booths as cab captains, scrutineers, and general helpers, and were all on duty by 8am. Refreshments were provided for polling booth helpers, and voters were cheered by the jaunty notes of Bulch's band, which the Federation League had engaged to liven up proceedings. [49]

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[47] *Courier,* 3 June, 1898, p. 2.
[48] *Courier*, 3 June, 1898, p. 2.
[49] *Courier,* 3 June, 1898, p. 2.

This group of rugged individuals was paraded around the streets of Ballarat in Councillor Elliott's drag, from whence they performed "lively airs" at regular intervals. Much discussion was heard around all the polling booths.
At Ballarat East, the Federationists were even more enthusiastic. The president of the branch, Mr. T.M. Paull, and his committee, had their forces well organised, and an active effort was made to secure voters:

> There was no apathy among the natives. In addition to the outside workers, a splendidly organised band was arranged in the Ballarat Fire Brigade Hall checking the votes as they were recorded, and when it was that certain persons who had expressed their opinion in favour of Federation had not voted, a vehicle was immediately sent away for them.[50]

These vehicles, more often than not, sported a placard saying "Federation Vote 'Yes' ".

The *Courier* was very much on the Federation bandwagon. The Editorial on ballot day spoke in high-minded terms of

> the serious duty laid today upon every elector to put away all disabling things, all indolence, all carelessness, all movable hindrances, and do his solemn duty on this great historic day as an Australian of that larger citizenship which only federation can confer.[51]

The paper noted the necessity for practical measures to be taken which would enable as many voters as possible to get to the polls, but pointed out that this was no ordinary day, and that Ballarat voters, along with the rest of the

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[50] *Courier* 4 June, 1898.
[51] *Courier*, 3 June, 1898.

country, would be called upon "to leave our politically "low-vaulted past", to stretch out for a grand Australian nationhood, to reach towards the "ampler "ether", the "diviner air" of the higher, larger, broader politics involved in our manifest destiny as an Australian Commonwealth whose power is to be paramount in this hemisphere, and whose voice is to be potential in the mightiest empire the world has yet seen."[52]

And yet, despite the energy and enthusiasm of the Federation League, the Australian Natives Association, and all their supporters, the voter turn-out appears to have been, at best, only slightly better than average. Out of 5744 voters on the roll, 3477 attended. Over two thousand citizens (2267) did not record a vote - a disappointing result, considering the much-vaunted importance of the occasion. Federation supporters made light of it, preferring to dwell more on the very positive YES vote which resulted. In Ballarat West, of 3473 voters, only 116 voted against the bill, while a significant 3357 voted in favour. In Ballarat East, out of a total of 3457 voters, only 1806 voted, with, again, a large 1767 YES for Federation, and only 116 against.

The *Courier* was jubilant regarding the gratifyingly high YES vote in Ballarat, and in Victoria generally, but fairly scathing when it came to assessing the failure of the NSW vote to amass the required 80,000:

> If Federation depended upon 50,000 affirmative votes in Victoria, the early creation of the Commonwealth could be foretold with the utmost confidence; but while the people of this colony were sincerely federal, those of the mother colony were not, and that the fate of the measure - the fate, indeed, of the whole work of the Convention - rested in the hands of the electors of New South Wales.[53]

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[52] *Courier*, 3 June, 1898.
[53] *Courier,* 4 June, 1898.

The *Courier's* disapproval of the inability of the bill to get up in NSW is fairly evident:

> Supposing the total in the mother colony is short of the 80,000, can she in fairness and honesty and good faith hold aloof from a movement she inaugurated and fostered, and in which she took a leading part? The sons of the Empire everywhere are looking on at Australia now and they will note whether the Welshmen are little Australians only, or "brethren of the blood".[54]

The overall feeling is one of vindication of Victoria's stance on the prospective Commonwealth, particularly marked by what can only be described as 'sour grapes' that the wicked New South Welshmen were able to burst the Federation bubble so easily:

> The cause of national unity is morally won with flying colours in all the four states subjected to the Federal referendum. It is absolutely won in three states, and only lost by a breach of faith perpetrated by party politicians in New South Wales, who coalesced for that purpose in order to give vent to an insane jealousy of Victoria. This was … an exemplification of the narrowest and most unfederal spirit of political parochialism.[55]

The *Courier* was offended at H.B. Higgins' assertion that Ballarat's pro-Federation stance was due to the expectation that the city would become the new national capital. This was claimed as a gross accusation, and equivalent to saying that the people of the Ballarat district, the majority of whom were "good Liberals as there are in Australia", voted for the Commonwealth Bill, not because of their federal feeling, of their democratic principles, or their

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[54] *Courier,* 4 June, 1898.
[55] *Courier*, 7 June, 1898.

honest appreciation of the merits of the Commonwealth Bill but because they expected "some material and pocket benefit, some sordid idea of boodle to accrue from the passing of the bill." The voice of the *Courier* sounded a little bit sheepish as it admitted that it was possible that "some few persons" had allowed themselves to use the possibility of Ballarat as the federal capital as an argument for voting for the bill, but it was felt that, on the whole, these unworthy persons were "an unimportant minority". The motives of the general voting population of Ballarat were beyond reproach … "it is not a wholesome argument … ". "We resent Mr. Higgins' comment and tell him it does him infinitely more discredit than it does to the reputation of the people in this district." Mr. Higgins was given an ultimatum:

> Either he must withdraw his most unwarrantable imputation on the good faith of the Liberals of this district as publicly as he made it, or forfeit their good opinion … we thought better things of Mr. Higgins.[56]

Whatever the practical benefits of Federation for Ballarat voters, they certainly assumed the high moral ground once the first ballot had been decided. Nothing but the purest motives were attributed to their conduct and voting decision during the campaign.

At a meeting of the ANA at the City Hall on 10 June, the very air was filled with smug self-congratulation. The president, C. C. Shoppee and secretary A.M. David presented a glowing report on the work accomplished by the organisation since formation - most of which had been regarding Federation. The report concluded on a high note:

> It is a matter for the warmest congratulation that in spite of almost unceasing heavy rain from early morning till the closing of the poll, an enthusiastic concern for the welfare of the Australian Commonwealth was shown in Ballarat to a degree not exceeded, if equalled, in any other community throughout Australia, and this, we venture to assert, springing from the purest of national motives and aspirations.[57]

It is difficult to accurately assess how widespread this feeling for Federation was in Ballarat: if one looks at the ballot, one sees a very significant majority in favour of the Bill but a significant proportion of the populace not interested in voting. In an effort to understand this, the 'voice' of Ballarat, the *Courier,* metaphorically shrugs its shoulders and merely relegates these individuals to the bottom of the social and political ladder :

> Doubtless, the larger interest of the Federal question was expected to be at least potent enough to equal the more peppery vigour of party electoral disputes, and the personal influences which pertain to rival candidatures, but we have seen that, no matter what the motives to go to the poll, there is a big dead lump of inert electoral matter always to be reckoned with.[58]

L.F. Crisp argued that it was easy to over-estimate the popular interest in federation,[59] and pointed to the comparatively unimpressive figures for even the second referendum (1899), noting that (nationally) fewer than 43% of the electors voted YES for an indissoluble federal Commonwealth. Ballarat's "big dead lump of inert electoral matter" obviously comes within this framework, but even then, the *Courier* was able to recognise and identify the differing attitudes which surrounded Federation, and comprehend the factors which were involved in achieving it. Obviously the "inert electoral matter" was a

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[56] *Courier,* 6 June, 1898.
[57] *Courier*, 11 June, 1898.
[58] *Courier*, 7 June, 1898.
[59] Crisp, L.F. *Australian National Government*, Longmans, Melbourne, 1973, p. 12.

significant negative - but the vigour of the federation rhetoric elsewhere was still an important element. McMinn observes that the "abstention rate of two-thirds on the critical question of 'nationhood' " requires explanation, and concludes that, "It can only be that a considerable majority of the people of the colony remained deeply sceptical about the whole concept. "[60] But Helen Irving believes that there is still a question to be answered: " which is more significant: the rate of turnout, or the rate of approval? By which should the people be measured?"[61] She argues that the federation of the Australian colonies was not so much a *mass* movement as a *popular* movement; it was *the people*, as a unit, which was required to be involved in the final processes of approval - indeed, federation could not be formally achieved without this approval. Irving further points to the 'popular' nature of the press and their involvement in the approval process:

> The decision of some key urban newspapers greatly to increase their print-run at the time of the referendums is an indicator of the level of public involvement, as were the great crowds gathered outside the newspaper offices waiting for referendum results to come in.[62]

Federation, argues Irving, was "in the air", and the imagined nation[63] had done its work well, placing the idea of a federated, constituted nation firmly in the hearts and the minds of the populace. Deakin, examining in the *Argus* the reasons for Victoria's impressive vote in favour of Federation, tacitly acknowledges the importance of 'the people's victory':

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[60] McMinn W.G., *Nationalism and Federalism in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 190.
[61] Irving, Helen, *To Constitute a Nation:: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution,* Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997, p. 153.
[62] Irving, Helen, *To Constitute a Nation*, p. 154.
[63] Irving, Helen, *To Constitute a Nation,* see Chapter 2, "Before a nation can be formed, a group of separate populations must imagine themselves part of a larger national community. Then they must imagine it as natural and inevitable that such a community should exist." p. 25.

> It was indeed a victory of the people themselves, not under the stimulus of any organisation, although undoubtedly assisted by the Australian Natives Association, the Federal League, and other kindred bodies. Looking at the fact that, except in a few suburbs an active canvas was impossible, and only an insignificant number of voters could be personally persuaded to vote for the bill, while the weather was extremely unpropitious all over the colony, the victory achieved … was a remarkable tribute to the spontaneous loyalty of Victorians to the federal cause.[64]

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*[65] deals at length with the concept of nationalism, which he identifies as being notoriously difficult to define and analyse. He characterises a nation as an "imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign"[66] and argues that it is imagined "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[67] The concept of this 'community' supersedes the actual inequality and exploitation which might prevail, and conceives itself as part of a "deep, horizontal companionship".

The unity expressed in Ballarat on this Federation eve, as represented in the large rally attendances and vigorous reporting in the press, appeared to be a direct response to the emotion of the occasion, rather than a considered and balanced evaluation of the arguments for and against. Ballarat folk quite simply appeared to enjoy the cut and thrust of the hustings-style of debate; they entered with gusto into the rowdiness and emotion of the occasion, and, in the immediacy of the moment, seemed little interested in the real

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[64] Deakin, Alfred, in the *Argus*, 4 June 1898, pp10 - 11; quoted in Aveling, Marian: "History of the A.N.A., 1871 - 1900", Ph.D., Department of History, Monash University, 1970, p. 401.
[65] Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities,* Verso, New York, 1991.
[66] Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.
[67] Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities* p. 6.

implications of Federation. They hoped against hope that Ballarat would be chosen for the national capital, and even though this may seem an unreasonable - and even humorous - expectation to modern historians, at the time the possibility was very real. Ballarat's push for Federation was predominantly significant because it provided the opportunity to advance her own cause at the expense of the larger, more threatening identities like Melbourne. Having passed through the realities of an economic and mining downturn in the last twenty years of the century, Ballarat people must have sensed that the famed pre-eminence of the 'Golden City' could be slipping away. Federation must have seemed a convenient, emotive issue with which to rally the sliding morale.

The spectre of the encroaching metropolis was a real one. Graeme Davison encapsulates the threat which the development of 'Marvellous Melbourne' posed to the goldfields cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. Davison points out that Melbourne increased her share of Victoria's population from 26 per cent in 1871 to 31 per cent in 1881 and 41 per cent in 1891. The goldfields, he claimed, had been losing population since 1870s, and they had declined a further 11000 in the 1880s. The mining exchanges of Ballarat and Bendigo could not compete with the new finance houses and exchanges of Melbourne, and the mainstay of the rural economies, the foundries and engineering shops, flour mills and breweries were closing down or moving to the metropolis where fuel was cheaper, distribution more efficient, and markets larger.[68]

> … the tentacles of Melbourne's commerce and industry stretched to every section of the colony. In the eyes of jealous provincials, the city gradually assumed the appearance of a

[68] Davison, Graeme, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1978, p. 7.

> monstrous wen, draining the countryside of its talent and vitality, leaving behind the carcasses of farms and townships.[69]

Weston Bate, too, sees the assault by the metropolis in sinister terms.

> Melbourne's merchants and manufacturers, sitting like spiders at the centre of Victoria's railway fan, threatened Ballarat's future as a regional centre. … Melbourne's commercial and financial dominance, its employment attractions for migrants and country people, and the resulting economies of scale in industry, made it the enemy of all country towns.[70]

Bate identifies many of Ballarat's important manufacturing and commercial icons which were drawn to Melbourne,[71] and claimed that Melbourne competition was an important factor in the rationalisation of Ballarat production. "The proud citizens of the industrial, self-made town were jealous and suspicious of its commerce-dominated big brother, who was growing bigger and bigger by grabbing most of the loans sent out from Mother England."[72]

In Ballarat, many people could - and did - exercise their right to stay away from the polling booths on both referendum days. In spite of this, the *Courier* is able to hail the outcome with jubilation, and manages to convey the impression that the city is indeed a federal city. A number of practical issues - both negative and positive for federation - strongly influenced the outcome of the ballot, and these were understood and dealt with by the voting Ballarat populace: loss of Victoria's Riverina trade, the adverse effect on Victoria's railways (particularly the provincial ones), the criticism of 'provincialism', fear of the "Free-traders". These had all been presented, and still the

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[69] Davison, Graeme, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, p. 7.
[70] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 217.
[71] These included Steinfeld's furniture, Rowland's drinks, and Sutton's music.

[72] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 218.

attraction for Federation held strong. All the rhetoric seemed harnessed to the inevitable and overall importance and value of Federation, a noble aspiration to which all loyal citizens must raise themselves. There does seem to be a high-mindedness, and a dignity - even a greatness - of expression when the movers and shakers of federation in Ballarat contemplated the issue. "But after all, is federation worth having?" asked the *Courier* editorial:

> Is it not well to make some sacrifices of our pet theories, to put up with some temporary inconveniences; nay, even to dip our hands into our pockets for the sake of securing a real national life, a country recognised by our mother land as a worthy daughter whose interests must be considered and opinions consulted, a country with one army and one navy and a well considered scheme of national defence, sufficient with the assistance it has a right to expect from the mother country, to secure it in the future from foreign aggressions. When by accepting the proposed constitution we obtain not only this, but at once and for ever escape from the fetters of provincial jealousies, of hostile tariffs, of vexatious restrictions to trade and intercourse, and obtain enlarged markets for our manufactures, enlarged fields of enterprise for our young men where they will no longer be regarded as strangers but as fellow citizens of one Commonwealth, there can be but one answer for patriotic Australians - "We accept the Constitution."[73]

The hard work done by organisations like the Australian Natives Association would certainly have cemented the importance of Federation in the hearts and minds of the populace. Records attest to the strength and active nature of Ballarat's ANA. Marian Aveling's thesis identifies the enthusiasm which this branch displayed for increasing membership, and points out that in the eighties Ballarat replaced Melbourne as the prime founder of branches in Victoria: fifteen were inaugurated between 1880 and 1883, and all but two were founded through Ballarat's influence.[74] Membership figures for A.N.A.

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[73] *Courier*, 1st June, 1898, p.2.
[74] Aveling, Marian, "History of the A.N.A. 1871- 1900", PhD, Department of History, Monash University, 1970, pp. 34-35.

branches in Victoria (1874 - 1884) show Ballarat's numbers as being consistently higher than Melbourne between 1878 and 1884. In 1884, Melbourne could only record fifty members, compared to Ballarat's impressive four hundred and fifty eight.[75] The organisation's support for the Federation movement was not without qualification, but the overall voice was one of confident support,[76] and the range of issues which it aired before Federation would certainly have helped to create an important awareness and understanding of the implications of national unity. As early as June 1875, the Ballarat Branch was debating "Is a Republic or a Limited Monarchical form of government better? ", whilst questions like free trade versus protection, free and compulsory education, transport, and assisted immigration were also on the agenda. In April 1879 an essay entitled, "The Federation of the Australian Colonies" was read by Mr. Wainwright, and, indicating the tendency to remain within the Imperial system, "The Causes of Britain's Greatness" was repeated twice within three months (and four times in two years). By the eighties, Federation was moving into full gear, and in August 1884 four thousand people attended a public meeting in the Alfred Hall on the subject of Federation - this was seen at the time as possibly the largest and most successful meeting ever held in Ballarat. In the years preceding Federation, almost all the key issues were aired by this vigorous group, culminating in the motion entered in the minutes on 16 July 1900:

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[75] Ibid. p. 418.

[76] *Advance Australia* contained the following message to members in 1898: "Truly it seems as if the A.N.A had a mission in this land of ours, beyond the ken of its founders … Now the work of the Federal Convention delegates is completed, the Commonwealth Bill - the most liberal Constitution yet evolved from the brain of man - is presented to the people, the A.N.A is the first to say: 'This is the Charter for which we have worked through long years, and we will give it our whole-hearted support'." Johnson, Judy, *One Nation with One Destiny The role of the Australian Natives' Association in the Federation of Australia*, published by the A.N.A. 1984, p. 15.

> That this branch of the ANA places on record its keen sense of appreciation at the passing through its final stages in the Imperial Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth bill and also of the work in London of the Australian Delegates in connection therewith.[77]

McMinn argues that, "The colonies were coming together into a federation, but the loyalty of their people to their provincial identities remained strong."[78] He develops the idea of "colonial particularism", the belief that colonists still maintained strong parochial or provincial loyalties to their state, in spite of, or in the face of, demands by federationists to look 'nationally'. But even whilst he argues (cynically, by his own admission) that "the federal movement was a campaign run by politicians, not a great, irresistible national groundswell"[79], McMinn acknowledges

> the incontrovertible fact that by the 1850s there already existed in Australia a local loyalty which went deeper than a desire for responsible government, the mere local control of local affairs. This remained, and would long remain, perfectly compatible in the vast majority of minds - even Irish-Australian minds - with a wider loyalty to the British Empire. [80]

The *Courier* speaks, even on a local level, of securing "a real national life"[81], which, it seemed, it was possible to obtain even whilst retaining Imperial loyalties - "a country recognised by our mother land as a worthy daughter whose interests must be considered and opinions consulted …"[82].

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[77] Minutes of the Australian Natives Association; Minute Book Number 9, 24/4/1899 - 21/10/1901, Meeting, 16/7/1901.
[78] McMinn, W.G., *Nationalism and Federalism in Australia,* OUP, 1994 p. 190.
[79] McMinn, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 1994, p. 183.
[80] McMinn, *Nationalism and Federalism,* 1994, p. 24.
[81] *Courier*, 1 June, 1898, p. 2.
[82] *Courier*, 1 June, 1898, p. 2.

Helen Irving goes so far as to suggest that the Australian Federation, and its contemplated Constitution, was unique in its ability to combine 'colonial particularism' with the retention of Imperial loyalty … "an entirely novel political system. … Australian cultural nationalism can be made compatible with adherence to the British monarchy."[83]

Ballarat, in this sense, reflected the national trend. Alongside Bendigo,[84] the city's large vote for Federation was a practical manifestation of Anderson's 'imagined nation'. It was the final statement of the populace after years of considering both the rhetoric invoking the idea of a nation, and the pragmatic outcomes of a federation of colonies. This was not necessarily one clear clarion call for unity (as McMinn would argue), but it was a useful and ultimately sensible assemblage of the relevant facts and advantages, cemented together with the mortar of patriotism. Furthermore, it was the invocation of the 'imagined' nation at a time most convenient for both regional centres such as Ballarat, and a reasonably convincing section of the population in the nation as a whole.

Helen Irving suggests that, nationwide, "Australians were capable of both pragmatism and romanticism" in their dealings with Federation and the creating of a constitution,[85] and certainly, Ballarat voters were no less capable. She describes the Australian Constitution as standing, "almost unchanged, as

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[83] Irving, *To Constitute a Nation*, p. 40.
[84] The Bendigo vote was also dramatically in favour of Federation. The city voted 95% in favour of the proposed constitution. Of the 5068 who returned votes, 4740 voted *Yes*, representing a 13% higher vote than the *Yes* vote for the whole colony. In the 1899 Referendum, Bendigo voted an even stronger 98% in favour of the amendments.
Cusack, Frank, *Bendigo a history*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1973, p. 185.
Note: Cusack's figures differ somewhat from the official sources in Victorian Parliamentary Papers, where Sandridge/Bendigo is recorded as voting 3760 *Yes,* and 276 *No* in 1898, and 4708 *Yes* and 101 *No* in 1899. The essential trend indicated, however, is still clear.
[85] Irving, *To Constitute a Nation,* p. 215.

a reflection of the prevailing values of the 1890s. It is an artefact of that time, with all the hidden richness of a plain, colourless piece of flint, dug up by an archaeologist who knows that in it is captured a whole cultural system."[86] In Ballarat, Federation might be seen, in part, as the outcome of a complicated interweaving of pressures - both local and national - which culminated in what the Ballarat *Star* called "the peaceful triumph of Australian federation"[87]. The *Star* commented particularly on the combination which was necessary for Federation to have occurred:

> Such a union could not be achieved by any number of public men or legislators. The impulse had to come from the people themselves, and the silken cords spun by the sense of a community of sentiments and a community of interests, will stand a strain that failing that common sympathy, would snap asunder the strongest and most cunningly devised bonds that could be forged into a constitution or legal enactment of any description. [88]

The *Star* seems, in effect, to be arguing here that, on the broader scale of things, an alliance of sentiment and pragmatism wove a convincing web of affirmation which eventually pushed the Ballarat Federation vote comfortably into the YES camp.

The maturity of the Ballarat society which voted on Referendum Days in 1898 and 1899[89] was not, as most things are not, a sudden occurrence. It was the realisation of half a century of the conscious and unconscious development of

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[86] Irving, *To Constitute a Nation,* p. 27.
[87] *Star*, 1 January, 1901, Editorial, p. 2.
[88] *Star,* 1 January, 1901, p. 2.
[89] *Victoria Papers preSented to Parliament Session 1899 - 1900, Legislative Assembly, Volume 2,* Australasian Federal Constitution Vote (1898) and (1899).
In 1898, Ballarat (East and West) voted 5388 FOR, and 297 AGAINST. In 1899, the vote was 5443 FOR, and 249 AGAINST. This was compared to Melbourne which voted, in 1898, 5740

local and national political and economic identities. Weston Bate argues convincingly for his "melting pot" theory[90] that the population of Ballarat was chiefly migrant until the 1870s; predominantly British, these were the "makers" of Ballarat, the men who, in the prime of their lives, forged the type of society which championed the solid achiever, and honoured those who accumulated wealth by their own efforts. This was not a frontier society, as Bate points out, but one more concerned with consolidation and stability; becoming more solidly fixed on British values, but simultaneously more determined to redefine those values in their own terms. There is a dualism here which is puzzling and yet illuminating - how could these men of Ballarat be both liberated and yet traditionally oriented? They were wealthier, better off, and more confident, and perhaps for this reason felt able to select the best of British values, and reject with a certainty and assurance impossible anywhere in the "old world' those values and social mores which seemed ill-suited to the new world they had built for themselves. Bate describes the situation thus:

> It goes against the grain to characterise the most dynamic Australian goldfield of the period as the one which was achieving the most British and least frontier-style economy and society. But the facts are plain. … Men were emerging wealthier and more independent than would have been possible had they remained in Europe.[91]

Ballarat, Bate argues, should be seen as

> socially downside up, free of ground landlords, gentry, aristocracy, an established church and other traditional institutions. … No other

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FOR, and 1928 AGAINST, and in 1899, 11661 FOR, and 1032 AGAINST. Sandridge voted 3760 FOR, and 276 AGAINST in 1898, while in 1899, it voted 4708 FOR, and 101 AGAINST.

[90] Bate, Weston *Lucky City*, pp. 145 ff.

[91] Bate, *Lucky City,* p. 148.

> British city of the nineteenth century, and perhaps of any time, could approach so closely the liberal-democratic ideal of equality of opportunity. Inherited capital hardly existed.[92]

Helen Irving touches on this 'collision' and synthesis of the old and the new when she speaks of how, in recent times, Australian historians have found it puzzling and improbable that Australians could genuinely feel themselves both British and authentically Australian at the same time. It is now understood, she claims, that the experience of the migrant is one of clinging to the old cultural identity whilst being inexorably changed by the experience of living elsewhere. Furthermore, the landscape itself, viewed through new cultural eyes, is itself changed.[93]

This statement has significant implications for any understanding of Ballarat's embrace of Federation. Dr. Irving is suggesting that from a synthesis of old and new - a mix of different cultures such as were found on Ballarat in the nineteenth century, emerges a completely new element. A sense of difference, engendered by the influence of a new environment and a new perspective, creates a new element or quality. Such a quality might go undetected in a society for many years, but can be made manifest in something like a vote for Federation, where local loyalties may be forgotten in the chance to make a presence felt at the national level.

Sudden and large migrations - such as those which flocked to Ballarat in the goldrush - can create a society fraught with stresses. The nature of such stresses depends on the particular identifying elements within each group: for example, religion, class, education, politics. The cultural baggage of British

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[92] Bate, *Lucky City,* p. 148.
[93] Irving, Helen, *To Constitute a Nation,* p. 30.

and European heritages created in Ballarat a multi-faceted society which needed, for its survival, to synthesise and resolve its differences. Outside pressures - those issues which are imposed on a society as a result of their membership of a larger body[94] - also add to the tensions within a society.

Federation appeared to offer an opportunity to resolve differences by placing such disagreement on a higher plane. In the reported celebrations, enthusiasm for Federation temporarily dissolved or suspended racial, religious and political differences, and those (for example, New South Wales) who refused to be a part of this euphoria were regarded with contempt.

Ballarat's strong vote for Federation is, perhaps, both parochial and nationally minded. Anxious to promote their own importance, Ballaratians looked to Federation to provide a 'big stick' with which to beat potential threats posed by Melbourne and Sydney. Ballarat's unstinted pride in itself and its achievements, combined with its sense of importance on a national level, and was most clearly expressed in the Federation vote.

The vote was a resolution - albeit briefly - of differences within the society; momentarily, differences were forgotten and the 'manifest destiny' of the Australian Commonwealth was glimpsed. Particular interest groups in Ballarat appeared to be willing to subjugate their individual agenda to what was seen as the greater good. But the path towards this recognition of the need for subjugation had been not without difficulties; strewn with subjective differences, it was littered with the restraints of old grudges and acrimonies. Yet it was the resolution of these differences, and the amelioration of these

[94] Free trade versus protection, education, economic considerations, overseas politics, 'the land'.

acrimonies - the one against the other - which set up the possibility of Ballarat as a single entity, supporting, and indeed embodying Federation. "There would be no meaning in the search for unity within a nation ... if the difference did not exist; nationalisms depend on difference..."[95]

It is to those differences that the thesis now turns. It is argued that a study of four Celtic groups in Ballarat enables us to reflect upon the evolution of what began as definable ethnic identities. If such a process is understood for the Celts, it could go some way towards understanding why Ballarat as a whole was able to present itself as both parochially and nationally loyal over the issue of Federation.

[95] Bhabha, Homi K. as quoted in Kramer, Lloyd, "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, July 1997, Vol. 58, no. 3, p. 537.

Figure 5 Duke and Duchess of York

Figure 6 The Australian Commonwealth Lion and Kangaroo

Table 1 Birthplace of Victorians

Table 2 Birthplaces of Ballarat Population

CHAPTER

2

The Cornish:

Miners and Methodists,
Ballarat 1851 – 1901

From Liverpool as I before have stated
We sail'd a motley set we surely were
With coals and iron was our vessel freighted
Scotch Irish Welsh and English were there
Going out to see if emigration
Was a recipe against starvation

There were ploughboys weavers blacksmiths tailors
Irish peasants and Welsh mountaineers
Together with a family of nailors
Scotch from the lowlands and some highland seers
Butchers bakers carpenters and joiners
There were also a lot of Cornish miners[1]

In April 1901, a meeting was held in Ballarat of Cornishmen residing in the district who wished to make arrangements for presenting an Address to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. The royal couple would be visiting Australia in June to open the Parliament of the newly Federated Australia. Mayor Whykes chaired the meeting. The wording of the Address was as follows:

[1] Payton, Phillip *The Cornish Overseas,* Alexander Associates, Fowey, Cornwall, 1999, p.19, from "The Emigrant's Farewell" by Thomas Thorpe, 1836.

Figure 7 Map of Cornwall

> May it please your Royal Highnesses, The men of Cornwall residing in Ballarat and surrounding districts desire to approach you their hereditary Duke and her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall with assurances of loyalty and regard, as the head of the county to which we have the honour to belong.
>
> We bid you hearty welcome to our Australian homes, in which we still claim to be Cornishmen and British subjects, loyally devoted to the Empire and to his Most Gracious Majesty King Edward the Seventh. And we pray that the Almighty King of Kings may bless and prosper you, and that in the fullness of time, when you are called upon to preside over the destinies of the Empire you may be found following in the footsteps of justice and righteousness, which characterised the reign of our late dearly beloved Queen Victoria the Good.[2]

The Address was signed for, and on behalf of, Cornishmen residing in Ballarat and surrounding districts, by D. Ham, M.L.C. President, J. Whykes, Mayor of the City of Ballarat, I. Pearce, J.P., Mayor of the Town of Ballarat East, Vice Presidents, and R.M. Serjeant. J.P., Secretary.

In one sanguine breath the Cornishmen of Ballarat vouched loyalty to the federating Australia, to their Cornishness, and to the British Empire.

In this chapter the aim is to look at the context for the emigration of the Cornish to Ballarat, to ponder on aspects of their ethnicity and indigenous skills in Cornwall, and to document and analyse how these thrived or changed shape in the context of the goldfields and the subsequent city building of Ballarat.

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[2] *Ballarat Star*, 13 April, 1901, p. 8.

Historian Patrick O'Farrell has written that, "Australia was for a very long time not so much a nation as an assemblage of assorted immigrants, living out of the cultural and psychological baggage they had brought with them."[3] This was never more true than during the era of the gold rushes, when shiploads of immigrants from every corner of Britain and the globe brought themselves and their cultural inheritance to this country to help form the matrix of modern Australia. This chapter argues that both the Cornish expertise in mining and the broader aspects of Cornish culture and social skills left an enduring imprint on the development of Ballarat. It discusses these 'broader aspects' and identifies certain characteristics which can be recognised as particularly 'Cornish', which were developed by the people of Cornwall to ease their passage from ancient times, and through the difficult years of the industrial and domestic turmoil of nineteenth century Britain.

Briefly, the industrial and mining crisis which Cornwall experienced in the nineteenth century is examined, and it is demonstrated that emigration was perceived as the answer to the problems which beset the county.

The Cornish have long promoted the idea of themselves as successful emigrants. The particular characteristics which have identified them could be said to have sprung from the skills gained from a strong mining background, as well as their hardy individuality, which expressed itself in the establishment, in the nineteenth century, of Methodism as a religion and a way of life. The chapter submits that these qualities which have been styled self consciously "Cornish" by both historians and the Cornish themselves, were carried with them to the New World. In the significant contribution which they made to the nature of the developing society which they found in

[3] O'Farrell, Patrick *The Irish in Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, 1986, p. 14.

goldfields communities such as Ballarat, the identifying characteristics of these "Cousin Jacks and" can be seen and understood more clearly. Comprehensive demographic information about the Cornish on Ballarat is not available, a situation which has been regretfully recognised by other Cornish scholars. However, much can be learnt through an empirical study of the undoubted presence of the many Cornishmen and women who travelled from the "little land of Cornwall"[4] to the Antipodes, and thence to Ballarat.

The chapter maintains that the Cornish brought to Ballarat their mining skills, their staunch, strongly community-oriented Methodism, their sense of kinship, and their ability to adapt these skills to a new and 'alien' environment. The Cornish penchant for 'self-improvement', and their willingness to participate fully and conscientiously in the society to which they had pledged allegiance left its mark on the legacy of benevolence and independence which Ballarat carried with it into the twentieth century.

Using available primary goldfields history sources, a picture is drawn for the reader of the alien yet familiar scene which the emigrating Cornish would have been met with on their arrival on the Ballarat goldfield. Tracing their perception of this scenario through letters, Church records, and the like, the chapter then spends some time developing the role of the Cornish in the newly forming colonial society. It discusses the ways in which the Cornish emigrants quickly became involved at both management and labour levels in Ballarat's principal occupation - mining, as well as discussing the use of innovative Cornish technology on the Ballarat goldfields. Evidence is provided of Cornish participation in the variety of occupations which sprang up in response to the need to service the goldfields, and the nature of the

[4] Rowse, A. L., *The Little Land of Cornwall*, Allen Sutton, Gloucester, 1986.

Cornish involvement in the establishment of Methodism in Ballarat is described, with the ensuing 'network' of Cornish folk which spread across the township. Finally, it is suggested that the lasting legacy of the Cornish people was the part which these 'mining Methodists' played in creating a new context within which the city of Ballarat could move into a federated Australia, and the twentieth century:

> The task of the contemporary historian is … to (emphasise) the essentially Britannic character of our collective experience (and) also to concentrate on the separate identities of the constituent peoples. As both R.R. Davies and. Professor Anthony D. Smith agree, while Nationalism as the ideology which underpins the modern nation-state may be a recent construct, ethnic identities and communities pre-date the modern world. The early emergence of the English nation-state, therefore, should not blind us to the existence of other *ethnie* in the British Isles - … and amongst those *ethnie* that emerged as proto-nations in the medieval period were the Cornish.[5]
>
> When we leave Plymouth we shall come to a bridge, and once the bridge is crossed we shall be in Cornwall.[6]

The "Little Land of Cornwall"[7] forms the most south-westerly point of the United Kingdom. The County has only one land border that with the County of Devon, to the east. This eastern boundary is marked for almost its entire length by the River Tamar. This makes the county a peninsula, and were it not for the short piece of land north of the Tamar, some say it would be an island.

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[5] Payton, Phillip, *Cornwall* Alexander Associates, Fowey, (Cornwall), 1996, pp. 86-87.
[6] du Maurier, Daphne, *Vanishing Cornwall : The Spirit and History of an Ancient Land* Penguin, UK and Australia, 1967, pp. 3 -4.
[7] Rowse, A. L., *The Little Land of Cornwall,* Alan Sutton 1986.

The ancient land of Cornwall, almost entirely surrounded by sea, is peopled by the descendants of an ancient race, known historically as *the Celts.* Payton, in his impressive and comprehensive work *Cornwall,* uses Cunliffe's definition of the Celts, thus:

> The Celts were the inhabitants of Europe in the pre-Roman period, occupying a vast territory stretching from the Pyrenees to the Rhine, and from Ireland to Romania. They were barbarian in the classical sense of the word, energetic, quick-tempered, and 'war-mad'; but their craftsmen created a brilliant art style and by the first century BC a truly urban society had begun to develop in many areas.[8]

Awareness of the importance of the ancient Cornish heritage is crucial to any understanding of modern Cornish history. Historians and writers have for years grappled with, and been fascinated by the ancient face of this modern county, and modern Cornish historian Phillip Payton writes of the paradox of a land which is both a "far-flung remnant of the Celtic world", and "the limelit stage upon which the global earth-shattering acts of the Industrial Revolution were first performed."[9]

Historically, the Cornish have been consistently described as a pragmatic, independent race, renowned for their ability to turn potentially hostile situations into positive scenarios. In the state of flux in which Cornwall found itself in the nineteenth century such qualities were invaluable - even essential - and almost certainly enabled them to cope with the necessity of maintaining a duality of identity which allowed them to pursue both a strong regional character, and maintain their position in the more universal notion of a far-flung British Empire.

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[8] Payton, *Cornwall* p. 48.
[9] Payton, *Cornwall* p. 2.

Specifically, the Cornish could be clearly identified by a distinctive dialect, an ancient and classical race derivation, and a sense of independence and defiance which was allied with a sense of clannishness and a feeling of solidity. The 'Great Emigration' of the nineteenth century, and the economic circumstances which triggered it, illuminated the nature of typical Cornish qualities, as did the evolution of the particular societies to which the Cousin Jacks emigrated. Ballarat was one of these. The disasters which overtook the county, and the ways in which the inhabitants dealt with these, in a sense help to shape an understanding of 'Cornish' qualities, and also how they came to be applied in new and foreign scenarios. Cornwall had been mainly a rural society, supporting predominantly agriculture and fishing. Mining had also been a staple industry, and was the means whereby Cornwall moved out of the shadow of medieval times into the industrially developing nineteenth century. "Cornishmen, from the beginning, have always dug for wealth. They were, are tinners, copper seekers, quarriers, slate breakers, clay workers, farmers."[10]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cornwall was entering a period of prosperity and creative energy which was almost unequalled in other parts of Britain. Its rise was spearheaded by the development of the Cornish tin and copper mining industry, and placed the county at the forefront of innovative mining practices which were transplanted across the oceans to America and Australia with the migrating Cornish people. Cornwall was, at the time, the most important metal mining county in the United Kingdom.[11] Payton's

[10] du Maurier: *Vanishing Cornwall*, p. 14.

[11] "Cornwall was the most important metal mining county in the United Kingdom. It probably had the longest history of continuous production and a total value of output that dwarfed its nearest rivals. …. It produced nearly all of the country's tin and arsenic and most of its copper. … the county briefly claimed the country's largest single lead mine - East

"impressive pageant of industrialisation" was peopled, and driven, by a new breed of Cornish industrialists and entrepreneurs; as noted Cornish writer and *litterateur* A. L.Rowse observes, it was the age of Richard Trevithick[12], Humphrey Davy[13], and Davies Gilbert[14], who was President of the Royal Society. Practical engineers, industrialists, patrons and entrepreneurs[15], these "industrialists - capitalists, innovators, inventors, reformers - brought a particular singlemindedness and determination" to Cornish society which redefined it as a modern, progressive society, and helped to re-define the Cornish identity based on industrial prowess.[16] In fact, these men led the Cornish charge to reinvent themselves in the face of the challenge thrown up by the Industrial Revolution. By 1850, Cornwall was still producing much of the world's supply of tin and copper, with approximately three hundred and forty mines employing fifty thousand Cornish men and women, or one third of the working population.[17] In the atmosphere of change and confidence which flourished at this time, the number of Cornish inventions matched the wealth of Cornish mines, so that the sum total was a rich body of experience and expertise which formed what Payton has called the " central plank of the

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Wheal Rose - in the mid-1840s. Cornwall produced a wider range of minerals than any other district … and was the only one to see large-scale mining continuing down to recent times. The only important mineral that the county did not possess in commercial qualities was coal. … the county … nevertheless became a leader in the early stages of British industrialisation. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Cornwall pioneered deep mining and steam pumping technology and its miners and managers were eagerly welcomed in mining districts throughout the world." *Mineral Statistics of the U.K.: Cornish Mineral Production*, http://www.ex.ac.uk/%7ERBurt/MinHistNet/MS/co-intro.html [15/05/97], p. 1.

[12] Trevithick, famous Cornish engineer, and inventor of the railroad locomotive in 1804.

[13] Davy, scientist, Fellow and President of the Royal Society, knighted in 1812, and in 1815 invented the miner's safety lamp.

[14] Davies Gilbert, "technocrat, inventor, reformer, antiquarian, patron of both arts and sciences, and encourager of the likes of Trevithick and Davy", MP, President of the Royal Society, known as the "Cornish Philosopher. "Payton *Cornwall*, p. 210.

[15] Rowse, A.L., *The Little Land of Cornwall*, Sutton, 1986, p. 13.

[16] Payton, *Cornwall,* p. 207.

[17] Todd, Arthur Cecil, *The Cornish Miner in America* Bradford Barton Ltd., Truro, Cornwall, 1967, p. 16.

Cornish identity."[18] Barton claims that "by 1850 Cornishmen had more experience of deep mining, and
with it, deep pumping, than the rest of the world put together."[19] Significant developments relating to the mining industry, including the steam engine, the safety lamp, the miner's safety fuse, beam engines, and pneumatic rock drills came out of Cornwall in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the development of railways, ports and canals, whilst predominantly emerging from the Midlands, helped establish the county as a world leader in mining and mining techniques. But Cornwall's industrial dominance, riding on the back of new mineral discoveries and an increased awareness of the need to become competitive in a new, industrial Britain, also spawned a sadder legacy. The conditions under which many miners worked were far behind the technical advances which allowed the mines to exist in the first place. Todd describes the life of a Cornish miner as "nasty, brutish, and short"[20]: hard, physical labour with little relief from appalling physical conditions, unrelieved poverty, illness, danger, and starvation. Similarly, the life of a farmer in Cornwall in those years was more often than not one of an unrelenting struggle against privation, diseased crops, poor seasons, high rents, and high taxation. Claims that Cornish society was more individual and independent than the rest of Britain may indeed rest upon the notion of a more equitable arrangement of land and mine ownership[21], but this does not invalidate the evidence that by the middle of the nineteenth century life in Cornwall was becoming increasingly uncomfortable for a great many of its inhabitants.[22]

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[18] Payton, *Cornwall,* p. 211.
[19] Barton Bradford, D., *The Cornish Beam Engine,* Bradford Barton, Truro, 1989, p. 252.
[20] Todd, *The Cornish Miner in America,* pp. 16-17.
[21] Payton, *Cornwall,* pp. 214 -215.
[22] For further illumination of this point, see also Rowe, John, *The Hard Rock Men Cornish Immigrants and the North American Mining Frontier,* Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1974, pp. 18 *ff.*

The rural poverty of the 1830s, and the "hungry Forties", involving the failure of the potato crop, caused widespread distress in Cornwall, as elsewhere, and emigration started to be seen as a useful safety-valve to relieve this difficult and unhappy situation. In fact, Payton claims that emigration was basically the means by which mass starvation was avoided in Cornwall.[23] Miners in Cornwall took to the streets to protest their despair and outrage at the turn things had taken - bad harvests doubling the price of grain, as well as the potato crop failure - and Cornish 'clannishness' knew a different kind of unity when, after the hard winter of 1846-7, bands of starving miners marched on towns such as Penzance, Helston, Redruth, St. Austell, Wadebridge, Callington and Launceston to prevent the export of corn and to force "fair prices".[24] The *West Briton* in May 1847 describes the march of angry Cornishmen in Wadebridge as "a large body of men from the Delabole quarries … mixed with others (streamers, china clay men, and tinners from Roche, Luxulyan, St. Austell, & c.) " who "laid siege to the town. … between three and four hundred men … each armed with a bludgeon. They presented a most formidable appearance and created great consternation."[25] Todd describes with vivid detail the kinds of conditions in which the Cornish miners and their families lived before 1850: the tiny cottage on the moor was no proof against the wind and weather, and the appalling diet caused even further deterioration of health which was already severely compromised by difficult and dangerous working conditions down the mine:

> Nor was the diet adequate and nourishing for the fight against disease: potatoes for padding and pilchards for the sustaining oil. Both could be plentiful and cheap, but if the harvest even partially failed

[23] Payton, *Cornwall*, p. 228.
[24] Payton, *Cornwall,* p. 228.
[25] *West Briton* 21 May 1847.

> starvation could result; the blight could ruin the one and some whim of nature take away the other.

Todd writes of the catastrophic effect on children:

> the dirt, disease and the lack of sanitation took their toll of young lives; at St. Just-in -Penwith in the years 1840 - 1849 a quarter of all males buried and a half of all females were boys and girls under the age of five.[26]

Changing conditions in the mining industry contributed to the economic uncertainty which beset Cornwall in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Payton points out that from the late 1820s, Swansea, in Wales, had become the focus for the international copper trade. Not only did they monopolise the smelting of British-produced ore but they also developed their ability to smelt copper from the international market. This began to undermine the near-monopoly of copper production which Cornwall had enjoyed, something which the Cornish 'adventurers' and entrepreneurs refused, at least initially, to take seriously.[27]

By the 1860s, the poor economic and social conditions which existed had built up to the extent that emigration was seen as a solution. The *West Briton,* old and respected Cornish commentator, is the best raconteur of this developing economic disaster which seemed to be befalling Cornwall just as the county was seemingly at the peak of its achievement. In January 1867 a gloomy scenario was depicted:

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[26] Todd, *The Cornish Miner in America,* p. 17, quoting Rowe, John, *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution,* Liverpool, 1953, p. 152.
[27] Payton, Phillip, "Cornish Emigration in Response to Changes in the International Copper Market in the 1860s", *Cornish Studies: Three* (ed.) Phillip Payton, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1995, pp. 62-63.

> The year now ended is one of the most disastrous for the mining interests of Cornwall during the present century … the failure of banks and public companies, leading to panic, distrust, an absence of speculation …. High rates of discount which locked up money … All the miseries and privations have fallen upon us which await crushed speculators, a partially-employed working class, and a general languor and depression in trade.[28]

As both Payton and Colman have pointed out, the distress in Cornwall was compounded by the loss of confidence engendered by the deterioration of the Cornish 'raison d'etre' - the mining industry. In a land where approximately one third of the population had been involved in mining, the 'flow through' effect of the collapse of the industry was huge. Mr. Charles W. Merrifield, writing to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, sets out the nature of the problem:

> … the terrible crisis which [Cornwall] has just entered. The condition of West Cornwall, at the present moment, is worse than that of South Lancashire in the second year of the American war - worse because there is no hope of recovery - But there remains the fact of a population of a quarter of a million just on the brink of starvation, with no resource but external relief. …The monopoly of tin has now ceased, and, this monopoly gone, Cornwall is too populous by half. The balance must be reduced either by emigration or starvation. The Cornish people have much endurance and much faith in the future. They trust to being able to bear the present pressure, and to recover themselves afterwards, and there is, therefore, no cry from public aid from them. But I have no hope for their future. …It is considered probable that at least ninety percent of the miners of West Cornwall will be absolutely out of employ by next Christmas. The middle and upper classes are involved in irretrievable loss by the general depreciation of property. The landed proprietors do not escape, for besides that they hold largely in shares, the land is generally very poor, but commands its price chiefly in consequence of the market afforded by the mining population. …Last Christmas about 200,000 persons

[28] *West Briton,* 4 January 1867.

> were employed in the mines or dependent on them; at the best estimate I can form there will not be 20,000 so supported next Christmas or thereafter. …Penzance workhouse is over-full, and sheds are being built to receive in-paupers, chiefly women, or families of which the men are seeking work abroad. The harvest-men are taking five shillings a week less than last in St. Colomb and St Austell markets, and still less westwards. The harvest is a thin one and promises to be a wet one; but the price of corn is not very material to those who can earn no money to buy it with. [29]

Cattle plague infestations, high prices of beef, the loss of the pilchard shoals, and the subsequent ruination of the fishing industry, the potato blight, all contributed to the disastrous downturn in the Cornish economy in these years.[30]

Against the background of such misery the silver and gold of the New World shone beguilingly, and with increasing appeal, as the Hungry Forties merged into the even more unhappy sixties - and the nearly disastrous seventies.

The Cornish began to emigrate: notwithstanding the economic conditions at home, the Cornish were attracted to the possibilities offered by the silver mines of Mexico and Peru in the early eighteen hundreds. Similarly, the copper mines of Chile, South Australia (Kapunda and Burra Burra), and the 'Lakes' copper-belt at Keweenaw in Upper Michigan attracted many Cornishmen. The Californian gold rush of 1849 was also a significant and attractive item on the mining agenda before the Australian gold rushes of the 1850s.

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[29] *West Briton*, 24 August, 1866, p. 6.

The Great Emigration of the Cornish overseas has been characterised as a truly remarkable phenomenon, and one which was part of the huge world wide emigration which took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth

[30] See reports in the *West Briton* 1866 - 1880, chronicling the "Distress in Cornwall"; also see Colman, Anne, "Colonial Cornish Cornish Immigrants in Victoria, 1865 - 1880" MA Thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1985, pp. 24 ff.

century. Todd places the Cornish exodus within the thirty five million souls who left Europe in this time;

> It has been estimated that in the century between 1815 and 1914 no less than 35,000,000 left Europe to better themselves in North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and elsewhere. This phenomenal army of souls on the march to a promised land constituted a movement so widespread in its origins, so diverse in its results and so complex in its nature that no final conclusions can be drawn about it until the special influences at work in every country have been considered.[31]

Dudley Baines has calculated that in the mass exodus from Cornwall to the New World (largely America and Australia) between 1861 and 1900 Cornwall lost no less than 10.5% of its male population overseas and 7.0% to other counties. If we look at the age of the men and women leaving, the figures are even more startling. Of Cornish men aged 15 - 24, 44.8% left for overseas. Of women in the same age group, 26.2% went abroad. All in all, some 118,500 people left Cornwall between 1861 and 1900.

The *West Briton* was particularly concerned by this situation, writing about the "unprecedented exodus of the bone and sinew of the working population" of the county. The newspaper was gloomy about the economic prospects for Cornwall, and in fact believed that emigration was the only solution which would alleviate the misery being experienced at home …"unless the spirit of emigration is kept up, the distress will be greatly increased."[32]

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[31] Todd, Arthur Cecil, *The Cornish Miner in America,* Truro, 1966, pp. 13 - 14.
[32] Baines, Dudley, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861 - 1900,* Cambridge, 1985, pp. 230 -232.

The impetus to emigrate was further encouraged by emigration agents, who provided somewhat exaggerated pictures of life in the New World; as well, newspapers published letters from Cornish folk who had emigrated, and who now spoke in glowing terms of the satisfactory prospects of life in (say) Australia. Reports of large finds of gold were also included in the local press[33], presumably alerting benighted miners and agricultural workers to greater expectations across the sea. Ever pragmatic, Cornish folk were ready to be convinced; the *West Briton* noted in its prophetically entitled article "Exodus", in May 1867:

> During the last twelve months, Cornish miners to the number of 7380 have left the county, 1155 of whom have settled in America, 670 in Australia and New Zealand, 450 in California, while the iron mines of Scotland and the coal and iron mines of the North of England have absorbed 1090; 1390 have left the district of Redruth and Camborne; 880 the districts of Gwennap, Stithians, Illogan and Phillack; 1590 the district of Lelant and St. Just; 80 the district of Wendron and Sithney; 205 the district of St. Agnes and Perras; 220 the district of St. Austell; and 1200 the districts of Liskeard and Callington. The returns from other districts are not so correctly ascertained, but must fall short of 2000.[34]

An exodus indeed: Arthur Todd estimates that Cornwall lost probably one third of its population, and points out that the majority of those who emigrated were "the young men and women who took with them the best

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[33] *West Briton*, 27 August, 1858 "Immense Gold Nugget: Captain John Ivey, of Brea, Camborne, has just received a letter dated 14 June from his son in Australia, who left this country on his return to Australia in January last. He states that a few days previous to his writing, an immense nugget weighing 2217 ounces, 10dwts, or nearly 185 pounds, had been extracted at Ballarat from a claim belonging to twenty-two Cornishmen. Nine of the fortunate men belong to the parish of Illogan, and among them Mr. William Jeffrey, who brought the monster to light. This is by far the largest nugget yet discovered, and in three days' exhibition for the benefit of the Ballarat Hospital, it has realised about £100." Thus was the finding of the world famous Welcome Nugget reported in Cornwall. (The report is actually erroneous: the nugget was found by *Richard* Jeffrey, brother of William.)

[34] *West Briton,* 17 May 1867.

years of their lives."[35] The rest of the century saw this trend continue, with Cornishmen and women infiltrating all corners of the earth.

The business of emigration always involved an enormous sense of loss. The act of will involved in leaving forever one's native land should never be underestimated, and in the case of the Cornishmen and women who made the huge journey to Australia, this wrenching emotion needs to be taken into account when assessing the impact which these people had on the societies to which they travelled. The fierceness of the loss felt by those who emigrated must be measured by the depth of the sense of belonging to the particular place, or country, and the sense of pride in that place.

The ancient richness of the Celtic cultures, and the particular Cornish pride in the depth and beauty of the "West Country" was a significant element in the make up of the Cornish people; in 1866, the *West Briton* published an extract from an article in the *Spectator* which attempted to understand the nature of the West Country, and in particular Cornwall. The article demonstrated the fact that even the Cornish themselves were somewhat preoccupied with noting the distinctiveness of the 'men of the West';

> It would be vain to speculate on the effect which such a land, so varied in its physical aspects and so richly gifted by nature, must have produced and must produce on the minds of its inhabitants. Such impressions are slowly and insensibly imbibed, and cannot be easily traced in their particular influence or estimated in their extent.[36]

The paper wrote of the "sturdy independence of character which marks the men of the West", and felt that the beauty and nearness of the sea assisted in

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[35] Todd, *Cornish Miner in America,* Truro, 1966, p. 19.
[36] *West Briton*, 14 September, 1866.

Figure 8 Cornish Emigrants

the development of such a character. It also defined a "cheerful and gentle courtesy" which was thought to be due to the "brighter aspects" of the country, and its genial climate, whilst the "deep shadows of the narrow valleys, the narrow alternations of cloud and sunshine, and the fantastic and dreary features of the wilder moorlands" might have influenced the development of the superstitious nature, and the belief in folklore which was seen as characteristic of the West Country people.[37]

In her book *A Sense of Place*, Allen attempts to define this allegiance to a physical 'place'. Here, she is discussing the idea of 'belonging' in American regional cultures, and in an essay within this work, Stewart claims that "regional consciousness" is "just as isolating as occupation, ethnic heritage, age, sex, or any of the factors that come into play when cultural groups identify themselves." Regional consciousness, she argues, "is less a matter of geography than it is a state of mind."[38] Allen writes of "the association of people with place, of kinship with landscape" which she claims runs "like a leitmotif" through people's perception of their "neighbourhood". It is significant to note her final discovery …"that the simple notions of home, of place and family, as revealed in ordinary, everyday conversation, contain in microcosm all the complex strands of human relations, economic patterns, and historical attitudes…."[39] Allen is speaking of the southern American states, but her findings may hold true for the Cornish people who left their homes in the nineteenth century. This act of departure was not merely a physical one, but had inherent in it a conscious decision to redefine the very core of their existence, and to re-relate to another, alien environment. Such a process is complicated and difficult, and generated what Richard Broome has

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[37] *West Briton,* 14 September, 1866.

[38] Allen, Barbara & Schlereth, Thomas J. (eds.), *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, (Kentucky), 1990; article by Polly Stewart "Regional Consciousness as a Shaper of Local History: Examples from the Eastern Shore", p. 74.

called "tension, created by the act of migration, which is the common experience of all Victorians."[40]

Those Cornish folk who left their beloved Cornwall were knowingly abandoning their 'sense of place' - their feeling of belonging, and were transplanting to an unknown culture. They left much that was dear:

> yet it was home and a pleasant land. The moors and the sea; the hills and valleys; the woodlands and fields; deep sunken lanes running down to the rivers and coasts, shadowed by overhanging trees, and the rough tracks cutting across the barren heaths; grey granite and whitewashed cob cottages, snug farmhouses, and stately mansions; tall-towered churches, minestacks, and the mysterious cromlechs and stone circles of an older, pagan time - all these struck responsive chords in the hearts of the men and women who had lived among them.[41]

Many of them had little or no idea of the nature of their destination. Richard Wearne, a Cornishman who left the Old Country after his family had lived there eight hundred years, travelled to America, and the sentiments, which he recorded on his departure, illuminate the nature of the emigrant's sacrifice:

> The Day was very fine. Thousands of People were on the warfs to witness our departure. Some, that I had taken sweet Counsel with for many Years others that I had given Employment to, but among the Multitude was my Poor Aged Father and Mother them that had Promised themselves we should be a comfort to them in their old age Bath'd in tears to see no more.
> At 6 o'clock in the Evening, Tuesday the 4 July 1848,we was towd out by the Brilliant steamer to the Bay of St. Ives, and we could see the

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[39] Allen, "The Genealogical Landscape", in *Sense of Place,* 1990, p. 163.
[40] Broome, Richard, *The Victorians: Volume 1, Arriving*, Fairfax, Syme and Wheldon, Sydney, 1984, p. vi.
[41] Rowe, John, *The Hard-Rock Men*, Liverpool University Press, 1974, p. 16.

> sand Banks covered with our Friends waving their anchifts, etc., untill we gragurly disapared. Tho' I join to sing Hymns with our Party on bord, it would not drown that great Affection that was so deeply stampt within my hart, it was as the Deviding the sinewrs from the Marrow, thinking on those that with Pain and sorrow brought us to Manhood to see, Props, no more now in their decline of Life. The Evening came on a Calm sea sickness soon came on some very ill, all of our Family was very well Except two of our little Girls they were very bad. The Next Morning at 4 O'clock little Breeze move on the water at 12 next day Cape Cornwall graguly Disapared one thing greatly comforted me to know I had left some behind that would not forget to pray for us …. [42]

Elizabeth Datson, born in 1818, had married tin miner William Datson and had eight children - one of whom, John, had emigrated to Ballarat. In a letter to her son John, living in Ballarat, in 1886, it is possible to comprehend something of the pressure which settlers in the New World experienced: pressure from home not to forget, pressure from the memories of their own hearts and minds - which *couldn't* forget. Elizabeth had been a widow for eighteen years when she wrote this letter:

> November 9 1886
> My Dear [son] and daughter [in-law],
> I now with very great pleasure seat my self down to write you a few lines hoping it will reach you in due time and find you all well it leaves me verry week and bad I am only just able to come from the bed to the fire Dear Son I received your kind and welcome letter and was glad to hear from you the too girls were glad to hear from thir brother Dear son you wanted to know about the family James is home hear and wife and seven children and a nother time I will write you thir names Thomas he is in America and he have a wife but no children he had but one boy but it is dead Josiah is married and have one boy he is also in americia he have been gone too years Elizebeth Ann she is not married she is in servant about two miles away from hear she come home once a fortnight to see me Katie she is home with me she is unmarried she go out to wash and paperhinging she do work verry

[42] Wearne, Richard MS Journal, quoted in Rowe, *The Hard-Rock Men,* Liverpool, 1974, p. 34.

> hard so you do see I and you come from a large famley to only too girls and I even glad that I have the too girls for thir my only support if I didn't have them I should be in the work house this years for I havent been able to tend myself for years and if I was beholder to my boyes I should go short.[43]

Such a letter - poorly spelled, and inadequately expressed - speaks of the conflict which emigrants and their families must have experienced as they struggled to adapt to the new order. Particularly for those first generations, home was very close to their hearts, and the memory of it would have been bitter-sweet and poignant - for surely no land was ever so different from Cornwall's green and pleasant fields than this "land of contrarieties" - this upside-down land which in every way seemed to vehemently proclaim both its physical and spiritual alienation from the old world, and the dear, familiar 'Home'.

On their arrival in Ballarat, the Cornish emigrants would have been greeted with an amazing alien scenario. Had they arrived in the fifties and early sixties, they would have witnessed a frenzy of activity set amongst a nightmarishly denuded landscape of clay piles, tents, open shafts, and a conglomerate of makeshift mining machinery - whims, puddling machines, cradles and the like. In winter, they would have seen mud, stagnant pools, and ravaged areas of 'bush', peopled by a driven and most miserable collection of ragged miners.

In summer, the same ragged miners, (now more sparsely clothed), were suffering under a cruel sun which bleached and hardened the earth, and reduced even the stagnant pools to dust craters. Of trees, after a year or two,

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[43] "Letters to and from Cornwall" in *Cornwall Family History Society Journal,* Number 80, June 1996, p. 20.

there were none, most having been cut down to use to timber the shafts. Despite the conditions, the Cornish emigrants would have been impressed by the sense of purpose imbuing the miners, and even more impressed with the amount of 'yellow stuff' being discovered on a daily basis by some. In October 1851, early days on Ballarat, Golden Point was described as "a citadel thrown to the ground. Thousands of men were running about like rabbits between burrows. Everything had an appearance of "deep yellow earth - yellow clothes - yellow hands - yellow faces - yellow everything."[44]

W.B. Withers, distinguished nineteenth century Ballarat historian, writes of the huge transformation which gold had brought to the hitherto peaceful pastoral setting of Ballarat; in so doing, he gives the spectator some idea of the scene which must have met an emigrant's eye:

> The quiet Ballarat sheep run … became suddenly transformed as by the wand of an enchanter. … Soon the solitary blue columns of smoke that rose from the first prospecting parties' camping places were but undistinguishable items amidst a host. The one or two white tents of the prospectors were soon lost in crowded irregular lines and groups of tents that dotted the slopes and flats, or spread out along the tortuous tracks made by the bullock teams of the squatter. The axe of the digger quickly made inroads upon the forest all round; the green banks of the Yarrowee were lined with tubs and cradles, its clear waters were changed to liquid, yellow as the yellowest Tiber flood, and its banks grew to be long shoals of tailings. Everywhere little hillocks of red, yellow, and white earth were visible as the diggers got to work, and in a few weeks the green slopes, where the prospectors found the gold of Golden Point, changed from their aboriginal condition to the appearance of a fresh and rudely made burial ground. At first the upturned colored earth-heaps were but as isolated pustules upon the fair face of the primeval hills and valley, but they rapidly multiplied until they ran together, so to speak, and made the forest swards but so

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[44] Bate, Weston, *Lucky City,* p. 17, quoting *Melbourne Daily News* journalist Gibbons, who described Golden Point, Ballarat, thus, 25 October 1851.

> many blotched reaches of industrious, the very feculence of golden fever everywhere in colored splotches with shadowed pits between.[45]

Cornishmen quickly moved to identifiable areas of settlement within the Ballarat area. As they had travelled, so they tended to arrive - in groups, seeking strength and comfort in the companionship and support of their fellow countrymen. Small Cornish communities sprang up in several parts of Ballarat, and soon became recognisable as 'little Cornwalls':

> "The place in which we live is called Cornish Town, on account of the inhabitants being nearly all Cornish." [46]

Peter Matthews lived on "Cornish Row", so named because all its inhabitants were from Cornwall: Peter Matthews, George and Mary Bate, William Morcom, John Richards, George Richards, Absolom Bennett, and William Matthews. Dell and Menhennet identify several areas in which Cornish folk gathered when they arrived on Ballarat: "Neil Street (Ballarat North), the Pleasant Street area of Ballarat West, Magpie to the South of Sebastopol, Little Bendigo, Redan and Mount Pleasant."[47]

Much to the delight and relief of the new arrivals, it seemed that Cornishmen were everywhere - Henry Giles wrote to his family from Liverpool, where he had met up with some of his Cornish compatriots: "John and me and about

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[45] Withers, *History of Ballarat,* p. 36.
[46] *Letters written home by Cornish Folk who emigrated to Australia in the Nineteenth Century,* collected by Dr. J. M. Tregenza, South Australian Archives, Mortlock Library, Adelaide, Peter Matthews, Ballarat, 1852.
[47] Dell, Lillian and Menhennet, Joy, *Cornish Pioneers of Ballarat*, Volume 2, published by the Ballarat Branch of the Cornish Association of Victoria, 1997, p. 5.

Figure 9 Cornish Row

twenty Cornishmen is now at lodgins all at one House. We are all about to start for the diggins as soon as possible."[48]

Once in Australia, Giles wrote home reassuringly to his parents, telling them that he had travelled up to Creswick Creek with his friend John and fifteen other Cornishmen; having reached 'the Diggins', they discovered

> Mr. Leggoe was in the Diggins, and we met a man who put John and me to Mr. Leggoe's tent. We had not been there many minutes before Richard Eddy from Treen and Matthew [Thomas?] from Treen and David Eddy from Bosignan came in. They are all in good health. Matthew White Richard Eddy from Bosignan John Hosling from Treweal [?] is in Fryer's Creek. We are five concerned together, John and Myself and Arthur Chellew from Zennor Church Town and two Miners one is from Sancreed called George Thomas. The other is from St. Day called Richard Harvey.[49]

George Thomas, claimed Giles, was his mate.

> He and me do belong on one pit we expect to Bottom next week which will be about 60 feet. John and Richard Harvey is together on another pit. Arthur Chellew is with William Hearne from St. Just in another pit, so we shall all share alike on the gain.[50]

Groups of Cornishmen travelled together, worked together and lived together, making particular locations around Ballarat their own. *Cornish town,* in Sebastopol, and *Mt. Pleasant* are particularly recognised as being almost

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[48] Henry Giles to Parents, Liverpool, 14 August, 1854, p1; from *Letters written home by Cornish Folk* , South Australian Archives, Mortlock Library, D6029/69 (L).
[49] *Letters written home by Cornish folk,* South Australian Archives, Henry Giles to Parents, Creswick Creek, 3 December, 1854, D6029/69(L2).
[50] *Letters written home by Cornish folk,* South Australian Archives, Henry Giles to his parents, 3 December 1854.

wholly Cornish in population. Henry Giles was amazed by the number of Cornish folk moving between Ballarat and Melbourne:

> We are surrounded by Cornishmen I have seen a great many that I know Thomas Floss was in our Tent yesterday he came down from Ballarat he is in very good health … in fact if I were to name all that I have seen that I know I should say very little else.[51]

George and Henry would have, indeed, stuck by one another, pooling resources, expertise, and results, attending chapel together, taking part in community activities together, possibly even going into business together.

The first Cornish miners coming to Ballarat would certainly have set up an important network of opportunity and community for those who followed. They came to Ballarat with many important practical and specialised mining skills - by the mid-nineteenth century, they had already acquired a world-wide reputation for the possession of expertise in mining; communities of Cornishmen were well-established in California, and in South Australia, at Moonta and Burra, an area which has become known as "Australia's Little Cornwall".

Although difficult to specifically document, the re-discovery of the Ballarat goldfield after the decline of '51 -'52, when the easy surface alluvial gold ran out, was almost certainly due to the arrival of many Cornish miners. Their mining expertise led them to an understanding of the deeper more sustainable nature of the Ballarat goldfield, and resurrected it when less experienced 'diggers' had given up and 'rushed' to Castlemaine.

The nature of the emigrant experience, as well as the nature of their mining expertise, drew the Cornish together in a solid community which, in many ways, helped to ward off the initial pangs of homesickess, and helped to create a small part of the fabric of what was to become Ballarat society. The letters of many Cornishmen from South Australia and Ballarat writing home to Cornwall clearly elucidated this infrastructure of professional and community support. The longing for home, and the old life, shows clearly in these letters, as Stephen Curnow writes to his parents in 1851:

> I have not seen either of the Trythalls yet Iain and Zacharias will give you all the News of they diggens So I have nothing particular to say at present But I hope you will still Continue to wright me all the News of the Neighbourhood and what you Intend doing with the Land … my Love to all my old associates not forgetting Mr and Mrs James Nancey Bean & Family Mr and Mrs Trembath Mrs. Ann Williams Mr & Mrs Taylor Mr & Miss Dito Mr & Mrs Traunach and tell Jack that 40 pounds is more here than 4 pounds at home I do not like to persuade any Person to come or stay but I send how I have got on and Leve Parties Please themselves My Love Mother Sister Henry and Ch??? Still remain Your affectionate Son We are in good <u>health</u> Stephen Curnow [52]

Henry Giles, too, exhorts his father to:

> write me as soon as possible when you receive this letter and leave me know the news from home. Leave me know what manner of harvest you had, and how the new mare do answer and how the little colt is getting on and if the Old Mare is in foal or not, and mind to take care of Old Smiler and leave me know if you received the Policy of my Life Insurance …"[53]
> Figure 10 Stephen Curnow

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[51] *Letters written home by Cornish folk,* South Australian Archives, SAA D6029/68 Henry Giles to his parents, 15 November 1854.
[52] *Letters written Home by Cornish folk,* South Australian Archives, D6029/1 - 115L; Letter from Stephen Curnow to his parents, St. Helen, from Friars Creek, 3 July, 1851, Letter I, p. 10.
[53] *Letters written home by Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, Letter from Henry Giles to his parents, K28, from Melbourne, 15 November, 1854.

Giles' great longing was to once more "lie down on the Barn floor" with "poor Dear John Newton", and "smoke our pipes together."[54] Joseph May had not even left London before he was sending instructions to his parents:

> You will please to tell John Burt to make a substantial box for the Rabbits like the other only give them a little more room and more air holes, and a small slide in the partitions instead of the whole partitions sliding out. Then all of the small Rabbits should be put in the small box, and the largest in the large one.[55]

The pressure to remain in touch with 'Home' must have been great; most of the emigrants left families behind, many with the thought that they would return, and still more with the expectation that substantial assistance would be offered to those back in Cornwall as a result of successes on the goldfields.

Throughout much of the correspondence there lies a lingering nostalgia for home - almost an inability to relinquish the bonds that joined them. Easily comprehensible, then, is the corresponding need to cling together in reassuring clusters, and to recreate wherever possible a familiar physical and spiritual environment. Jonathan Moon, writing about Maldon in the 1850s, joyfully described the happiness and security which must have been created when emigrating Cornish discovered an already familiar community established in the new country; he welcomed the "pretty little villages and neat cottages", which were surrounded by gardens, and took pride in the fact that nearly all of them belonged to "sober, steady, hard-working men" …

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[54] *Letters written home from Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, Letter from Henry Giles, D6029/69 (l), Creswick Creek, 3 December 1854.
[55] *Letters from Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, Joseph May to his parents, from London, 17 August, 1865, D6029/83L, M10.

"Cornish quartz-reefers, who are nearly all Wesleyan Methodists, and many staunch teetotallers."[56]

And yet the new land imprinted itself on the emigrants from the beginning. The Cornish, long recognised as a pragmatic, practical race, soon learnt to adapt their skills to the new workplace. Men with mining skills were needed above all else in Ballarat and it was Cornishmen who were amongst the first to understand and work the nature of the Ballarat deep leads, Cornishmen who discovered (in a Ballarat deep lead mine) the second largest gold nugget in the world (the Welcome, weighing in at 184lbs, or 84 kilos), and Cornishmen whose hard rock mining skills were called into action when quartz mining came onto the scene in Ballarat in the latter part of the century. Cornishmen had long been considered the aristocrats of miners, and this reputation went with them to the goldfields, and was confirmed by observers once they arrived. William Kelly, noted goldfields traveller and diarist, was particularly impressed with the expertise of the Cornish:

> The enterprise [of quartz mining] however, was kept alive by … the systematic plodding of Cornish miners, many of whom came fresh from their native land, while numbers also made their way from the copper mines of South Australia.

The neatness and professionalism of the Cornish appealed to Kelly:

> I entered into conversation with an intelligent Cornish man, who was working his small claim by the aid of his two sons, one a mere lad, the other a child; yet it was quite a treat to see the quantity of stone they

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[56] Moon, J.G., *Tarrengower, past and present A History of Maldon from 1853. Guide, business directory and calendar. Reminiscences of the good old times,* Howliston, Tate and Co., Maldon, 1864, pp. 8 - 9.

raised, and the neat, methodical way in which they were proceeding. The style in which their windlass was rigged, their platform

> constructed, their shaft stayed and propped, and their stuff assorted, in little heaps, as it were, bad, better, best, satisfied me that they knew what they were about.[57]

Earliest mining customs on Ballarat began with the innovative practices of the Cornish. Cornish picks (single pointed "because of its lightness and ease of use in confined spaces"[58]), bucket pumps based on the Cornish ones of the same name[59], the "hammer and tap" method of drilling or boring holes in the rock face, the "Cousin Jack wheelbarrow", and the Cornish designed whims are but a few of the examples often cited as claims to the Cornish domination of the early alluvial fields. In many ways Ballarat was the cradle of Australian mining technology. The mines in Ballarat went deeper, and grew bigger than other mines in other developing centres in the early years, and when the development of mining and mineral processing is examined, a Ballarat connection usually emerges. In areas such as the sinking of shafts through hard rock and wet, running ground, the large scale deep lead mining methods which were specific to Ballarat in the early 1860s, the use of gas lighting, air blowers, air engines, steam engines, and rope haulages underground, improvements to steam boiler design and application for engines, mining education, and mid-1850s quartz mining and processing methods - in all of these, Ballarat made significant contributions and in almost all, Cornish miners were to the fore. The nature of Ballarat mining matched more closely the conditions found in Cornwall than, say, those existing in the coal mines of Wales, and Cornish miners working in Ballarat conditions would have found recognisable situations in which to apply their specific and highly developed skills.

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[57] Kelly, William, *Life in Victoria or Victoria in 1853 and Victoria in 1858*, Lowden Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 191 - 193.
[58] Davey, Christopher J. "The origins of mining technology in Victoria: 1851 -1900", International Mining History Conference, Proceedings. Melbourne, 1, 1985, p. 8.
[59] Davey, "The origins of mining technology in Victoria", p. 9.

In the tin and copper mines of Cornwall, difficulties such as varying grades, hard rock, the ever-menacing presence of water, and the existence of silica dust prefigured similar problems in Ballarat mines. Cornish mines were usually identifiable by vertical shaft access, and by the use of the tribute system, a 'democracy' of mine management which allowed the miners to bid for sections of the mine, supply all the materials, and be responsible for expenditure in that section. In fact, the miners themselves virtually became the supervisors, geologists, financial managers and operators of their section. Such a system was employed on Ballarat (and in Bendigo) where the acknowledged greater freedom of colonial conditions encouraged the use of this system. It appealed particularly to the Cornish sense of independence, and their desire to retain a certain liberty and detachment from the traditional seat of power in the mine management. Blainey describes the tributers as

> aristocrats among miners. They worked in a company mine but were their own bosses, entering the mine early or leaving it early, even working all night when the pitch was rich and their time was running out.[60]

Phillip Payton observed that "the organisation of the mining industry both reflected and perpetuated the individualistic and independent strains in Cornish society."[61] Where Ballarat conditions presented a unique situation, the Cornish were able to bring into play their cleverness in adapting skills to a new environment, and were quick to recognise the possibilities for utilising their own special expertise. The Cornish quickly achieved positions of seniority in Ballarat mines. Anne Colman identified twenty-nine Cornishmen who were designated mine managers in Victoria between 1865 and 1880[62]; the

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[60] Blainey, Geoffrey, *The Rush that Never Ended,* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1963, p. 123.
[61] Payton, *Cornwall,* p. 215.
[62] Colman, Anne, "Colonial Cornish", MA Thesis, Melbourne University, 1985, pp. 256-257.

work of Dell and Menhennet[63] also contributed further significant biographical details for Cornishmen employed in mining in the Ballarat area, and it is possible to claim at least twenty-one known Cornish mine 'captains' or managers in Ballarat.

Such a figure does not include those Cornishmen who were engaged in the mining industry in a less exalted way and who can be identified as 'miners'; these men were even more prolific, although harder to enumerate, since many of them left little or no record of themselves. Phillip Payton quotes Lloyd's "extraordinary catalogue" of over seven hundred mine managers in Victoria who were either Cornish or of Cornish descent[64], and it is certain that further genealogical work will reveal that many more of these spent time at Ballarat, and applied their expertise. Many of the substantial figures in Ballarat mining are recognisably Cornish: Samuel Trembath, Robert Serjeant, William Williams, John Rowe, Nicholas Kent, William Treloar, John Trethowan, James Kernick. 'Captain' Nicholas Kent is still remembered for his staunch Methodism and practical mining skill; John Trethowan was manager of the New Normanby, the South Woah Haup, North Woah Hoap, North Prince Extended and British Queen Mines, as well as being a director of the latter.

Trethowan was a Justice of the Peace, a prominent mason, and a fine sportsman. John Rowe, from St. Just, managed the Britannia Quartz Mine, the South Imperial, and the South Star Extended, amongst others, and in 1886, whilst in the Transvaal, was invited to take charge of the practical mining class at the School of Mines in Ballarat. He was a certificated surveyor and metallurgist, as well. William Hicks was the legal and mining manager of the Guiding Star mine, which eventually became the famous Star of the East

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[63] Dell, Lillian & Menhennet, Joy, *Cornish Pioneers of Ballarat* Volumes 1 & 2, 1992 & 1997, The Ballarat Branch of the Cornish Association of Victoria.

Figure Cornish Mine Managers

[64] Quoted in Payton, Phillip, *The Cornish Overseas,* 1999 p. 247, and see Footnote 149.

mine. Hicks was a councillor on the Sebastopol Council, and Mayor in 1885 - 1886 and was a prominent member of the Old Colonists' Association, the Ballarat Hospital, the Benevolent and Orphan Asylums, and a Mason. He was also Superintendent of the Rubicon Street Wesleyan Sunday School for nearly a quarter of a century.[65]

Robert Malachy Serjeant is justly famous for his inspired and stalwart leadership of Ballarat's famous and rich Band of Hope and Albion Mine, as well as his fine record of entrepreneurial citizenship; in a sense, he epitomised the strengths of the Cornish miner, and his adaptability to changing mining conditions on Ballarat. Serjeant's enterprise - already inherent in his Cornish background - was confirmed in his subsequent mining experiences in South Australia and Ballarat, and his role in the development of the successful Band of Hope and Albion contributed towards a confirmation of the importance of the Cornish in Ballarat mining history. The *Ballarat Star* inadvertently summed up both Serjeant's contribution, and that of the many Cornish mine managers on Ballarat, in an editorial address in April 1880, in which it hailed the starting of new battery at the Band and Albion Consol's Company. The location of the new line of lode, which was in fact to give a rich new lease of life to the mine and all who were associated with it, was the result, claimed the *Star*, of "the sober conclusions of men of practical experience, and of men whose faith has been put to the test of the breeches pocket". [66]

Serjeant was a Cornishman, son of a surgeon in the Royal Marines. Born in 1828, he came from a family whose movements were dictated by the

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[65] Dell & Menhennet, *Cornish Pioneers*, various.
[66] *Ballarat Star*, 17 April, 1880.

characteristic nineteenth century Cornish emigration impetus. In 1848 Serjeant, aged twenty, arrived in Adelaide, South Australia, with his mother, stepfather, and sisters. Once gold was discovered in Victoria, he made his way to Forrest Creek. In 1853 he and his mate, Mr. Victor, were the first party in Victoria to sink through the basalt in search of a deep lead or a river bed hidden beneath volcanic rock.[67] In 1855, Serjeant and Victor found a very large nugget (about 500ozs.) and with his share of the sale (around five years' wages), he set himself up with the latest mining equipment, as well as beginning a lifelong interest in the share market, and in investment in local companies. Serjeant's company was the first, in 1855, to sink through the basalt on the Gravel Pits Lead, opening up the fabulous riches of the Ballarat deep leads.

Hereafter, Serjeant's career expanded in a way which could be said to illustrate those traits for which Cornish miners have become world-renowned. A local MLA, and an active campaigner for free trade, Serjeant moved easily between a high public profile and a more intense pursuit of fortune via improvisations in the arena of mine management and share broking.

Serjeant's career in Ballarat is most particularly associated with the fascinating and wildly successful story of the famous 'Band and Albion' Mine. Originally formed in 1857 by 120 men - most of them Cornishmen - the mine suffered, as did most Ballarat mines, from water problems.

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[67] McCarthy, P.L., "What was it like to be an underground operator in Ballarat in the 19th Century?" Address to Underground Operators Conference , Ballarat, July 1992 , p. 1.

Figure 12 Serjeant

After battling for four and a half years, they hit the bedrock (at 260ft) and, continuing to seek the deep lead, sank the shaft still further, before driving horizontally on to the deep lead channel. With almost total predictability, sand and water immediately rushed in to the workings: the nightmare of deep lead mining recurred once more. Time thus far elapsed was five years. Two years later, the hapless miners were still battling the sand and water, until, after much trial and error, and repairing and adapting of over-taxed machinery, the shaft was sunk a further sixty feet, reaching a total depth of four hundred feet. It was a little over eight years since they had begun. Driving began, and further (similar) difficulties were encountered. New and more advanced machinery was purchased[68], and the deep lead was approached via a new shaft. Success at last crowned their efforts, the deep lead was opened up, and work began on the wash dirt, which was found to be five to seven feet thick.

> The long drive [to the Band of Hope lease] was made into a double tramway, with twelve horses pulling the rakes of trucks. The drive was illuminated by gas lamps from the town supply. A steam driven fan forced fresh air into the mine, the first mechanical ventilation system on a large Ballarat mine.
> An extensive treatment plant was built.[69]

Robert Serjeant became involved with the Band and Albion in 1868, and his rise to prominence on this board was marked by fairly inauspicious circumstances. Serjeant and his associates forced an election to facilitate a merger between the 'Band and Albion' and the 'St. Andrew' company, of which Serjeant was a director. The original St. Andrew board opposed the

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[68] McCarthy, Address, Ballarat, July 1992, p. 2. ..."the largest steam pump then available, which was relocated from a copper mine in South Australia. This was a 22 and a half inch 90 horsepower Cornish beam pump."
[69] McCarthy, Address, Ballarat, July 1992, p. 3.

merger, so Serjeant and his cronies pursed the somewhat dubious path of breaking into the company office at night and removing the company seals and cheque books. The *Mining Register* condemned such underhanded action:

> All true friends of Ballarat condemn such presumptuous and tyrannical usurpation of power in the middle of the night. If offences of this kind can be committed with impunity, neither life nor property will be safe in Ballarat.[70]

Despite such publicly expressed distaste, Serjeant's actions were vindicated, and subsequent legal action confirmed him onto the Band and Albion Board. In December 1868, he was elected manager of the company, a position he retained until his retirement thirty years later.

Serjeant's enterprise and industry was generally thought to be one of the main reasons for the success of the Band and Albion Mine, which, indeed, became Ballarat's largest and richest. In both mining and social matters he seemed to be ahead of his time - innovative, generous, diligent, and resourceful. He organised timbering experiments to try to improve working conditions, especially in the quartz mines, where he believed Ballarat's future lay. He continued to agitate against protectionism into the seventies, whilst all around him, quartz mines were closing down. He supported innovation, and publicly called for young men to design a reaper and binder to win a £1000 government prize. When times got tough even for the Band and Albion, in 1879, he supported operations from his own resources for several months until a reef was struck. Serjeant's grand new house in Darling Street, Sebastopol, was built in 1880, once the future of the mine seemed assured. The house still stands today.

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[70] *Dickers Mining Register,* 3 March, 1868, p. 90.

After an overseas trip to alleviate his bad health problems, Serjeant returned to Ballarat in 1884 as the No. 10 Shaft on the Band and Albion reached one thousand feet. Good yields and big dividends continued: Serjeant was a wealthy man. Throughout the decade, he collected exhibition medals and continued to promote and encourage innovation in and enthusiasm for Victorian mining:

> he had also been asking himself what inducement there existed for anybody to take this matter up with a view to effecting an improvement, and then he inquired were there no gold medals offered for award to inventors? If there were not, then he thought it would not be at all out of place if the Institute asked some of the more prosperous gold mining companies to give the Institute gold medals for distribution this way.[71]

Serjeant was also on the board of the newly-formed and ground-breaking School of Mines in Ballarat, and in April 1887 deposited £256 in the bank to establish an award for research into the treatment of complex auriferous ores. The award went unclaimed, and the fund was converted to the Serjeant scholarship in Mining Engineering which continued for nearly a century.[72]

One of his most significant achievements was to become involved, in the early 1890s, with the formation of the Australasian Institute of Mining Engineers. This institute was formed in Broken Hill, and had its inaugural meeting in Adelaide, in 1893. Serjeant who had been elected chairman of the Ballarat committee, chaired the first annual meeting, of the Institute which was held in Ballarat.

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[71] *Transactions* of the Australasian Institute of Mining Engineers, Volume 2, Account of the Ballarat Session, held March, 1894, published by the Institute, 1894, p.110.

Serjeant's energy, his willingness to stand alone if need be, his dogged determination to succeed in spite of what seemed like often impossible odds, and his courage and perseverance, all point to his Cornish background, where adaptability, mining expertise and community solidarity were acknowledged Cornish traits. Pride in the old ways, and faith in the old timers, were combined in Serjeant with a resolve to conquer the future with the weapons of the past:

> Mr. Serjeant … stated that he was proud that his efforts had met with the approval of the company. He had been connected twenty four years with the company, and was pleased that day to see around him so many of his old associates of the days gone by when the old Band of Hope was in the zenith of its prosperity. The engine driver who had years ago been in the company's service, was there beside them at the engine of the new plant, and the old blacksmith of the company was still in the company's service. The workmen were a fine body of men, and took as much interest in the company's affairs as the shareholders themselves. … He had great faith in the company, and was of opinion that it would yield gold and pay good dividends when their children's children were old men and women. (Immense applause)[73]

The Band of Hope and Albion Mine was Ballarat's greatest and richest - "probably the best gold mine in the world"[74]. Robert Malachy Serjeant, its manager, was a unique personality, and a Cornishman; as Peter McCarthy summarises, his life was a testimony to the idea of success from modest beginnings:

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[72] McCarthy, Address, Ballarat, July 1992, p. 7.
[73] *Ballarat Star*, 17 April, 1880.
[74] *Ballarat Star,* 17 April, 1880.

> From humble origins Serjeant gained a breadth of mining experience, engineering competence, community service, educational and political involvement.[75]

McCarthy also suggests that such a success story is probably no longer possible - a point which Hamilton Jenkins recognised in a different, broader context, in his famous *The Cornish Miner.* Jenkins commented that

> men of this type, who prefer the independence, together with the risks, of working on their own to the usual wage-earning conditions of the modern industrial system, are the last of a fine tradition of miners, and they themselves stand upon the threshold of disappearance.[76]

But in Ballarat in the nineteenth century, the time was ripe for such as Serjeant, and the many other successful mining Cousin Jacks.

The Ballarat cemetery is documented[77] as the resting place of a total of one hundred and fifty Cornish men, women and children; these figures are obviously not conclusive, since mining is a transitory occupation, and the mining population is a moving one. There were almost certainly more Cornishmen and women who moved through - some to return and settle, some to follow the gold to Forest Creek, Bendigo, and so on. Certainly, not all miners were successful - and the Cornish did not have a monopoly on success. But it can be reasonably claimed that the miners of Cornwall were certainly sought after and employed throughout Victoria, and in Ballarat, for their hard rock mining expertise, and their mine management experience. As well, they brought with them a legacy of engineering knowledge and

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[75] McCarthy, Address, Ballarat, July 1992, p. 8.
[76] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K. , *The Cornish Miner An Account of his Life Above and Underground from Early Times,* London, Allen and Unwin, 1927, p. 340.
[77] Reynolds, Lois, *Burials with Cornish Locations in Ballarat Old Cemetery*, Genealogical Society of Victoria (Ballarat Group), 1988, pp. 3-8.

expertise which also sprang from their Cornish background, and which, when adapted, proved enormously valuable to the needs of the new mining industry on Ballarat - and to the more general demands which an emerging society placed on its population.

Indeed, the value of such less-specific skills was probably of more enduring importance to the development of Ballarat society than the more obvious mining skills. Although impossible to document statistically, for each success story on the Ballarat goldfield, there were many more stories which told of limited or very modest gains, and some which spoke of utter and abject failure. A "person might make a fortune in the first pit he sinks or he might sink 20 and Get nothing."[78]

Peter Matthews writes of the lottery of the early alluvial diggings; Stephen Curnow tells them at home that there were many who were

> wishing themselves at Home if the(y) had been Transported for Life the(y) could not Look more sad. Great numbers of Cornishmen loose (sic) all confidence as soon as they loose (sic) sight of Engine houses and white jackets.[79]

Henry Giles, in February 1855, recognised that the days of easy gold were over for good:

> I would not advise anyone at home to think they are sure of making their fortunes by coming to Australia. There is not the chance now

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[78] *Letters from Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, D6029/90(L), Peter Matthews, to his family, 27th July, 1853, N15.
[79] *Letters from Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, D6029, Stephen Curnow to his parents, 10 September 1854, I14.

> there was three or four years since. A man could not miss it in them days. In fact the Diggins are still very rich but very likely There is fifty one on the Diggins now to what there was four years since However there is still a better chance for a careful industrious man here as what there is at home.[80]

Cornishmen joined the ranks of disappointed diggers who had crossed the sea seeking a new life, only to find that the stories of streets paved with gold were far from the truth. However, as the gold ran out, or became harder to find, Cornish folk - as with other new settlers - turned to alternative sources of income. Many, of course, were absorbed into the new type of mining which was developing on Ballarat - the quest for the rich deep leads, or buried rivers, as well as the dawning realisation that Ballarat's riches lay hidden in the rich quartz veins beneath the basalt of Ballarat West. The skills of the Cornish hard rock miners were well to the fore here. But many diversified, and, having found a modest amount of gold, used this small capital to purchase land, or set themselves up in more secure or lucrative livelihoods. The story is told in the directories of Ballarat, where the historian can clearly mark the transition from many 'miners' to an increasing number of small businessmen and women. The numbers of residential dwellings and small businesses increased, as one would expect, markedly, and there is clear evidence of Cornish folk in Ballarat diversifying into a wide variety of occupations, including foundry workers, small tradesmen, artisans, teachers, ministers of religion, and engineers.[81] Henry Troon, whose family hailed from Ludgvan, set himself up as a Blacksmith and Colonial Oven Manufacturer in Ballarat in 1870; he worked as a mining and agricultural

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[80] *Letters from Cornish folk*, South Australian Archives, D6029/69(l), Henry Giles to his parents, February 1855.

[81] Payton makes a general assertion about this state of affairs …. "Cornish artisans appear as bootmakers, saddlers, tailors, farriers, carpenters, joiners, stonemasons, brickmakers, iron founders, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and a variety of other occupations relevant to life on

blacksmith, and by the time of his death in 1929 had built up a substantial business. Richard Trahar (from Perranarworthal) operated one of the earliest foundries in Ballarat, and began a family business which was still operating in 1955; William Hambly joined a boot making establishment in 1856, after seeking gold in Ballarat and surrounding areas: Gimblett and Hambly gained distinction in Ballarat for the high quality miner's boot which they made, and Hambly and Son became one of the largest retail manufacturing footwear businesses in Ballarat. Cornishmen like Cyril Retallack became noted for their entrepreneurial talents; despite little formal training, Retallack was responsible for the erection of some important engineering edifices in Ballarat, as well as some notable buildings. Noted Ballarat and Victorian architect Henry Caselli was also a Cornishman whose career burgeoned from a multi-skilled background which allowed him to practice in many areas once he arrived in Victoria. Caselli's occupation was variously described as "mechanic", "draughtsman and constructor", "blockmaker" and "mast and blockmaker"; in Ballarat, he had a finger in several pies, and was responsible for some of the city's and district's finest buildings. He was involved in mining at all levels, both in a 'hands on' capacity as well as a shareholder, executed important engineering projects, and was a noted public citizen in the city of his adoption. On his death, Ballarat's newspapers vied with each other to outdo the superlatives:

> Father of the district, always courteous and lively, … we have lost an old identity, esteemed citizen and leading professional man, … he was noble kind and honourable … he was a Man, take him for all in all.[82]

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the colonial frontier." Payton, Phillip, *The Cornish Overseas*, 1999, p. 248. Ballarat's particular experience offers corroborative evidence to support this assertion.

[82] Quoted from Ballarat newspapers in Anderson, Dorothy, *The Tradesmen of the* Gazelle, Hazell & Colin Billington Typing and Desktop Publishing, Burwood, (Victoria), 2000 p. 179.

James Ivey, a Camborne man, arrived in Ballarat in 1854 and by the 1860s was in a position to open a large foundry in Bridge Street. He was a prominent municipal reformer, and became Mayor of Ballarat East in 1871. He was Chairman of the Ballarat Water Commission, and a Captain in the Ballarat Rangers. Ivey was also entrepreneurial in developing the fleet of steam boats on Lake Wendouree; he was the largest original owner of the six elegantly appointed steamers which plied upon the Lake, and in 1887 became part proprietor and manager for the Garden City Steam Boat Company.[83]

In the quest to transfer allegiances and establish familiarity in a new land, possibly the single most important element linking the Cornish network in Ballarat was the early and vigorous presence of the Wesleyan and Methodist churches. From the outset, Cornish folk worshipped together:

> There were seven preaching places. The first, appropriately enough, was Wesley Hill, so called because of the number of Wesleyans who lived about the spot. The great name of Wesley stands at the very front of our history in the golden city. Then came Cornishtown, which needs no explanation. But it is appropriate, too, in this place. Where did Wesley have greater triumphs than among the Cornish folk? They have contributed greatly to Methodism in these lands.[84]

The Cornish connection with the Methodist Church in Ballarat is strong; in almost every instance of the establishment of a place of worship for Wesleyans on the goldfields, Cornish names, Cornish money, and Cornish devoutness were present. Chapels proliferated on Ballarat; Withers identifies eleven, whilst Colman counts twenty-three. The number varied, of course, depending on the location of the current digging population. Particularly

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[83] Withers, *History of Ballarat*, p. 257.
[84] *The Spectator*, Special Edition "Ballarat Circuit History", 8 September, 1905, p. 1470; from the records of the Lydiard St. Wesleyan Church, Ballarat.

notable in these lists are Lydiard Street, Mount Pleasant, Skipton Street, Rubicon Street, and Neil Street. Many of these are still in existence today.

Statistically, the figures for the number of Methodists on Ballarat showed a particularly stable membership: always more than the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian populations, and peaking in 1891 at slightly more than even the usually predominant Church of England.[85] Whilst it is true to say that not all Methodists were Cornishmen - and that not all Cornishmen were Methodists - nevertheless, the predominance of Cornish names on Circuit lists, Sunday School rolls, and other church records provides clear evidence that the Cornish played an undeniably important role in the establishment and proliferation of this religion. The numerous ministers and lay preachers of Cornish birth who proliferated throughout the Victorian circuit also confirm the Cornish influence. Names like Martin Hosking, Sam Ham, 'Jimmy' Jeffreys, William Hicks, John James, 'Captain' Nicholas Kent, Benjamin Angwin, and Peter Eva are strong for the presence of the Cornishmen in the forefront of Methodism in Ballarat. Colman points out that two thirds of the teachers at the Mount Pleasant Wesleyan Church in Ballarat appear to have been Cornish. Mount Pleasant was, itself, a centre for Cornish settlement, beginning as early as 1855, when mining developments directed the diggers towards areas around the Mount. Mount Pleasant was central to the Redan, Magpie, and Miner's Right leads, and was well supplied with the essentials required for a good camp - water and firewood. With the opening up of the

[85] In 1857, Methodists comprised 15.55% of the population, compared with Presbyterians 14.89%, Roman Catholics 12.15%, and Church of England 43.57%. In 1861, Methodists were 17.50%, Presbyterians 14.89%, Roman Catholics 14.40%, and Church of England 35%. In 1871, Methodists 21.98%, Presbyterians 13.86%, Roman Catholic 19.29%, and Church of England 26.65%. In 1881, Methodists 23.90%, Presbyterians 12.25, Roman Catholics 20.15%, and Church of England 27.19%. In 1891, Methodists peaked at 27.11%, with Presbyterians at 11.84%, Roman Catholics at 18.90%, and Church of England at 26.15%. In 1901, the figures settled back to Methodists 20.98%, with Presbyterians 11.91%, Roman Catholics at 16.44%, and Church of England at 25.93%, *Census of Victoria.*

Gravel Pits Lead, diggers (Cornish amongst them) moved into Mount Pleasant, and took their church tent with them. This was pitched on the corner of Morton and Tress Streets, and was constructed with slab sides and a canvas roof. It held about one hundred people. Services were conducted by Cornishmen James Jeffrey, John James, and William James, amongst others, and music was provided by "Cousin" John Woolcock, who played the harmonium. He began a tradition in Ballarat of Cornish-led church music which was later carried on by his brother Vivian Woolcock, foundation member of the Ballarat Liedertafel, and a well-known tenor involved in the musical and cultural life of Ballarat for many years. Lists of early worshippers at Mount Pleasant again indicate the strong presence of the Cornishmen, whilst Colman points out that the attendance records of the Sunday School at Mount Pleasant "read like a Cornish Sabbath School roll".[86]

Colman writes of the particularly 'Cornish' brand of Methodism which seemed to proliferate across Victoria: "It was commonly described by non-Cornish in superlatives in an attempt to indicate the depth of feeling and devotion with which many Cornish Methodists served their faith."[87]

Particular elements of so-called Cornishness seem to be given a fuller meaning in their reaction to, and dealings with the raw societies of the goldfields. Henry Giles exemplified this excessive fervour and zeal which has traditionally characterised Cornish Methodists:

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[86] Colman, Anne, "Colonial Cornish…" 1985, p.171. "Names like Berryman, Paull, Trathen, Skewes, Keast, Curnow, Ninnes, Woolcok, Eustice, Caddy, Davies, Tresize, Grove, Nankervis, Blamey, Prisk, Eddy, Trethowan, Blight, Maddern, Nancarrow, Pollard, Bath, Bolitho, Benney, Tredinnick, Wallace, Haine, Praed, and Cann. In addition, there were the popular names of Pearce, Dunstan, Thomas, Williams, Thomas, Williams, Robert, Richards,

> drink is the ruination of hundreds here" ... "but my dear Father I have not spent a farthing since I have been in the diggins in drink and I am fully determined that I will not unless I feel the need of it.

Giles was clearly shocked at the degree of depravity which he found on the diggings, and looked with relief to the presence of those bastions of respectability and salvation, the 'chappels':

> There is a church and chappel in the diggins the same as at home, But Dear Parents This is a terrible place for sin and wickedness. The Digger is obliged to stop their work on Sundays. There is Thousands here who don't pay any attention to Sundays no more than another day. They goes about [?] and cutting wood and spending the Sabbath in a most fearful way. Butchers do kill Sundays the same as weekdays. … There is no respect of persons here, Jack is as good as his Master. There is no use for a man to come here unless he is steady and not given to drink. There is hundreds here who spend their money as soon as they get it. But my dear Father and Mother don't you never fancy that your Henry will turn out so I have worked hard since I have been here and I am determined to do my best in this country for a while.[88]

Attendances at churches are not documented, and are difficult to estimate, but it is important to note that the strong communal spirit of Methodism, with its wide involvement in all aspects of community life, lent itself to a broadly based local membership. The laity were encouraged to become involved with the church, and Benevolent Societies, Sunday Schools, and Temperance and Friendly Societies were invaluable extensions of the church's work. As indicated earlier, the diggings were particularly ready material for the evangelical zealotry and humanitarianism of the Cornish Methodists.

Martin, and Bennett." Taken from the Class Rolls of the Mt. Pleasant Sabbath School, Ballarat Box 1M, Wesleyan Church Archives.

[87] Colman, Anne, "Colonial Cornish …", 1985, p. 132.

[88] *Letters written Home by Cornish folk …* SAA D6029/68 Henry Giles to his parents, 1854. Sadly, Henry had no opportunity to prove himself; he contracted dysentery, and died on 16th May 1855.

Descriptions of activities associated with the Methodist churches on Ballarat illustrate a wide range of socially entertaining and supportive activities: bazaars, jubilee dinners, prayer meetings, Sunday School picnics, musical events, bible classes, and teas, are clearly designed to gather in as many 'lambs' to the fold as possible. A language of 'stewardship' and 'revival' and 'cause' spoke of an evangelistic approach which lent itself well to a society attempting to establish a moral and social base.

At the Neil Street Methodist Church, Cornish names proliferated at every stage of its establishment, and many of these people were, or later became, important members of the Ballarat community. Angwin, Trembath, Cargeeg, Trudgeon, Hosken, Lanyon, Kent, Ham and Trevan were amongst the discernible Cornish names involved in the founding of this Church. Cornishmen appeared at every turn: at Little Bendigo, the first services were held in Mr. Hosking's tent in 1857; regular early preachers included Mr. Kernick, whilst early workers numbered Cornish names like Trevorrow, Curnow, Hocking and Palamountain. Mr. John Borlase, mine manager, served as a local preacher.

A breakdown of wealth amongst national groups on Ballarat is not available, particularly with the Cornish, who are generally not separated from the English. However, an examination of the foundation of most of the Methodist churches in the area indicates some of the extent of Cornish financial involvement at all levels. The churches were usually built on a basis of borrowing capital which was then paid back after having been raised from within the church community. There seems rarely to have been a lack of success once such appeals were launched. Public meetings were held, donations called for, and all manner of innovative fundraising ventures were

initiated: at the Neil Street church on Soldiers' Hill, seats 'with backs' were let at 2s. 6d. per quarter a sitting, while those without were free.[89] Practical management of church affairs seems to have predominated, so that even when financial difficulties were encountered, sensible action was taken to avoid disaster.

The nature of the Methodist Church, with its emphasis on self-help and non-conformism, as well as its closely-knit community and tight organisation, was a particularly appropriate tool for those who sought to shape and survive in the rough and make-shift society which was to be found on the Ballarat goldfields. E. P. Thompson, writing in *The Making of the English Working Class*, warns against oversimplifying the nature of Methodism, but is prepared to acknowledge the value of such a religion to the poorer classes, and to emigrants:

> But it remains both true and important that Methodism, with its open chapel doors, did offer to the uprooted and abandoned people of the Industrial Revolution some kind of community to replace the older community patterns which were being displaced. … there was a sense in which working people could make it their own; and the more closely-knit the community in which Methodism took root (the mining, fishing or weaving village) the more this was so.[90]

Thompson speaks of the English migrant worker, but his comments could easily apply to Cornish emigrants in Ballarat. He suggests that the Methodist 'ticket' could mean entry into a new community, with its own drama, its own hierarchies, and mutual aid:

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[89] *Spectator*, Ballarat Circuit History, Wesleyan Church Archives, 2 February 1906, p. 189.

> Men and women felt themselves to have some place in an otherwise hostile world when within the Church. They obtained recognition, perhaps for their sobriety, or chastity, or piety.[91]

Importantly, Thompson suggests, the Methodist religion contributed to the stability of the family and the home - a crucial element in an unstable social situation such as Ballarat presented in the years after the discovery of gold.[92]

The very essence of Methodism was its appeal to the work ethic, and its concomitant sanctioning of the accumulation of wealth:

> Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all diligence in your calling. Lose no time … Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That, wherein you are placed, if you follow it up in earnest will leave no time for silly unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do. Something that will profit you more or less. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Do it as soon as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it. Put your whole strength in the work. Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a light or careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone, if it can be done by labour and patience.[93]

The call from John Wesley was to "hard work, thrift, and charity"[94] which suited goldfields conditions admirably. Wesleyanism was the religion of practical Christianity, offering the people hailing from Britain's industrial revolution a simple and compassionate solution to the evils of a corrupt and heartless society. Its grass roots democracy, allied to a seemingly

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[90] Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin, England, 1975, pp. 416 - 417.
[91] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 417.
[92] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* p. 417.
[93] Edwards, Maldwyn, *After Wesley, A Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Middle Period (1791 - 1849),* The Epworth Press, London, 1948, p. 89.
[94] Sunter, Anne Beggs, "James Oddie (1824 -1911) His Life and the Wesleyan Contribution to Ballarat", MA, Deakin University, 1989, p. 18.

contradictory conservatism, was particularly appropriate in a new society such as that in the process of formation on Ballarat. The principles of self-help and education for the hitherto uneducated found a ready reception in a society where the ground rules were still being developed, and strength, charity, and a concept of democracy were quickly recognised as valuable commodities in a raw and 'godless' society. As Serle points out, the Methodists/Wesleyans were outstandingly successful on the goldfields - more so than any other denomination - "No church had shown greater adaptability to the times in meeting the spiritual wants and emergencies of shoals of persons … placed in altogether new conditions of social life."[95]

In Ballarat, this was particularly so. Large numbers of Cornishmen formed the nucleus of the Wesleyan/Methodist church, and the nature of Ballarat mining - such that it developed from alluvial, through deep leads, and into quartz - meant that Ballarat retained its population throughout the century, and the Cornish Methodists were able to sustain a core of social stability which many other goldfields, possessing more fickle deposits and itinerant populations, lacked.

The innate conservatism of the Cornish Methodists served as a bulwark against the perceived Godlessness and vice of the diggings. As Payton points out, the Wesleyans took the Word to the remotest corners of the goldfields, usually the most prominent denomination in evidence from the earliest days. Ever-ready to preach from the nearest tree stump, or makeshift tent, the Wesleyans' very visibility and readiness to support their 'congregations' must have caused a good deal of relief amongst their adherents. In a letter home to his sister and brother, Peter Matthews related with great relief that "There is a

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[95] Quoted in Serle, Geoffrey, *The Golden Age A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851- 1861*,

large Tent erected for a place of worship not far from us. Its dimensions are 45 feet in length and 36 in breadth."

Matthews' longing for his native Cornwall, and his distaste for the rough goldfields life, is clearly expressed in his wistful observations to those at home:

> How long I will stop here I cannot tell, but While my health and strength continue I shall try to Accumulate something for myself while I am here for I do not intend to ramble about, And if I am spared to return to my native land I intend to remain there. … Since I have been here, which is about 12 months, I have seen great alterations. Some have been taken off in the bloom of youth and laid in the cold grave. Others have been very fortunate and returned to their native land and I believe there are hundreds here who will end their days here, and of reprobate characters, who are drinking, Swearing, and fighting, who do not fear God, or regard Man .[96]

Stephen Curnow's strict Methodist sensibilities were clearly affronted by the roistering lawlessness of the goldfields:

> When I first came on here the Roads were not safe day or night Even in Tents where every [man] kept firearms Hundreds were stuck up and Robed in fact murders was … of every days occurrence.

However, the calming influence of the "chapples" is hailed with relief …

> but now the reverse is the case the Bush rangers are all on the Roads in Irons and in case of any of them Escaping no cost is spared in hunting

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Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1963, p. 342.

[96] *Letters from Cornish Folk* , South Australian Archives, D6029/91(L), Peter Mathews to his sister and brother, Ballarat, January 15, 1854, N17, 18 and 19.

> Them down amongst us now. Robers are now confined to Towns and in a sly way The evenings used to be spent in Firing and reloading Guns and Pistols but now I scarcely hear the sound from weekend to weekend I have not seen mine the last three months Churching and Chapples and Publick Houses are springing by a magick like rapidity. Reading Rooms and Publick Librarys are also established in fact Socialibity is the predominant feeling here.[97]

One of the most fundamental and successful components of Methodism had been the establishment of the Sabbath Schools, and Ballarat's Lydiard St. School was one of the most successful in the state. Renate Howe counts almost one thousand enrolments at Lydiard St. in the 'palmy' years of the 1860s - and identifies these years as "rich in spiritual and intellectual life, and potent in the forces which mould men and women for good."[98] The Sabbath Schools were amongst the earliest and most successful institutions of the church on the diggings, and by their efforts to offer an education and an appreciation of the finer things of life they established Methodism as a significant force on Ballarat for the best part of the latter years of the century. The Mt. Pleasant Methodist Sunday school was quite clear about its mission - " to teach the rising generation to read and understand the Holy Scriptures with the view to make them wise unto salvation."[99]

Howe's[100] work on the occupations of the Methodists attending the Lydiard St. Church in Ballarat reinforces the small business ethic of the Wesleyans; a significant proportion of those who attended between 1855 and 1901 fall into the 'small business' category; of the two hundred and six regular

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[97] *Letters from Cornish Folk,* South Australian Archives, Letter from Stephen Curnow to his parents, 10 September, 1854, I 16.
[98] *Lydiard Street Methodist Sunday School, Ballarat, Historical Jubilee Report,* Ballarat, 1903, quoted in Howe, Renate, "The Wesleyan Church in Victoria 1855 - 1901 Its Ministry and Membership", MA, Melbourne University, 1965, p. 72.
[99] *Objectives and Rules of the Mt. Pleasant Methodist Sunday School*, 3 November 1856, quoted in Colman, p. 144.

attenders[101]forty five fall into the category of 'Proprietors of Small Businesses', and a further thirty nine who were engaged in 'Skilled Manual Labour', twenty-nine in 'Semi - Skilled Manual Labour' and twenty-seven in 'Clerical Employees'. That is, one hundred and forty, or over half the church members, fell into these categories - the backbone of the Church. And a further breakdown of the attenders reveals many Cornish names amongst the faithful. Howe also identifies twenty-one Cornish ordained Methodist ministers in the Wesleyan Church of Victoria between 1855 and 1901; this figure is by far the highest for any of the British counties or regions.[102]

Benevolence and community welfare was a central plank of the Wesleyan creed, and Ballarat was notable from the start in developing a tradition of compassion and caring for the community which survives to this day. The Ballarat Cornish were instrumental in initiating and implementing this social conscience; the Ballarat Benevolent Association was formed in 1858 as a direct response to the misery and poverty imposed on many of the less fortunate on the diggings. The organisation was remarkable for the fact of its non-government origins: before the existence of organised charity, voluntary assistance was at the core of a movement to aid and relieve "the distress to be found in Ballarat, the richest goldfield in the world."[103]

Engineer George Wright's sad tale motivated the formation of the movement. The Cornish community rallied around the family after their unemployed and frantic provider executed the ultimate act of desperation and threw himself into a mine steam engine, leaving his young widow and two children to fend

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[100] Howe, Renate, "The Wesleyan Church in Victoria", MA, 1965, Appendix 8, p. ii.
[101] Year not specified.
[102] Howe, Renate: "The Wesleyan Church in Victoria", MA, 1965, Appendix 9, p. i.
[103] Bauer, Doreen, *Institutions Without Walls A Brief History of Geriatric Services 1856 - 1985*, The Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Waller and Chester, Ballarat, nd. , p. 2.

for themselves. The community was horrified. Within four days a public appeal had raised funds to meet the family's immediate needs; a hat shop was purchased to provide Mrs. Wright with a means for an income. On 30 November, 1857 the organisers met to wind up their task, and canvassed the need for a permanent benevolent initiative. Out of this meeting emerged the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Society, chaired by James Oddie.[104] Almost certainly, the Society sprang directly from the earlier formation (October 1857) of the Relief Society at Mt. Pleasant, which was formed for "the relief of the distressed and afflicted poor in that neighbourhood".[105] Later (April, 1858) styled the Wesleyan Benevolent Association, this organisation appeared to have been largely peopled by steadfast Cornishmen, and, according to one newspaper report, dispensed quite significant amounts of money (relatively speaking) to the needy of the neighbourhood - £34 and £39 respectively - over a period of approximately six months.[106] When times were hard, as indeed they often were on Ballarat, the solid community spirit of the Cornish/ Wesleyan ideology stood firm, a bastion against a world of chance and rough justice.

Cornish mining engineer Richard Pope remarked, rather disconsolately as he searched for employment in the late 1860s, that "Cornish miners are a drug on the market, and not wanted."[107] Although it is difficult to calculate accurately the numbers of Cornish who travelled to Victoria, and Ballarat, in the nineteenth century, it can be demonstrated from church and mining records that they constituted a convincing and resourceful physical and spiritual presence in the colony.

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[104] Bauer, Doreen, *Institutions Without Walls*, p. 2.
[105] *Ballarat Star*, 5 October, 1857.
[106] *Ballarat Star*, 16 April, 1858.
[107] *The Diaries of Richard Pope,* Volume 3, Voyage to Australia, August 1866 - November 1869, p. 75, Research Library, Sovereign Hill Museums Association, Ballarat.

Figure 13 Richard Pope

Their continued allegiance to one another at all levels is consistently demonstrated by the inevitable logic with which these 'Cousin Jacks and Jennies' migrated to specific areas of Ballarat which therefore became recognised as solidly 'Cornish' areas. They lived together in Mount Pleasant, Cornish Town, and Sebastopol, and mined together, pooling their undoubted expertise, and demonstrating their claim to be counted among the best hard rock miners in the world. The strength of these working communities was further cemented by the power of the Wesleyan/Methodist religion, which sanctified and confirmed the values of self-help and benevolence which had constituted an integral part of their lives back in Cornwall. This closeness of community - a veritable 'kinship' of Cousin Jacks - can be clearly seen in the network of chapels and Relief Societies which sprang up in Ballarat from the earliest days of the Cornishmen's arrival on the diggings. Their practical benevolence was extended to all, no matter what the nationality and creed – and sprang from a belief that there was an expectation of duty and care towards those less well-off than themselves.

Anne Colman sums up the outcome of Cornish emigration to Victoria, and her statement might be usefully applied to Ballarat:

> The pursuit of economic independence and respectability reflected the desire of Cornish immigrants to become Victorians. The manner in which they did so indicates that adaptability characterised the Colonial Cornish.[108]

It should not be forgotten that the predominant rationale for emigration across all races and creeds was economic gain: the desire to improve their circumstances and make a new life for themselves, and a future for their children. This desire for wealth and independence took precedence over other considerations: ultimately, it governed the attitudes and activities of the Cornish, and shaped the nature of the society which they were helping to create. To this end all other considerations were subjected: in the end, the most important quality which the Cornish of Ballarat possessed was that characteristic which allowed them to adjust and adapt their particularly Cornish qualities and apply them in a practical way to survival in the new society. Their mining skills were successfully tuned to the new and challenging situations which Ballarat presented; their staunch Methodism provided both a social and moral framework within which to minister to the spiritual and moral needs of the community, and also the overriding seal of approval to the achievement of worldly success which conveniently sanctioned the maxim that godliness could be profitable.

Sadly, however, the very readiness of the Cornish to adapt, and the success of that adaptation, sounded the death-knell of their individuality. The fragility of their specific identity did not survive more than the second or third generation: by Federation, it is very difficult to distinguish the Cornish as a cultural unit within Ballarat society. The success of their integration is measured by the difficulty the historian has in finding evidence of a specific Cornish presence in Ballarat by the end of the century. Vigorous beginnings eventually merged into smooth adaptation; settlement dispersed, as population increased, willingness to administer pastoral care extended to the whole community, and mining excellence was achieved in the name of

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[108] Colman, Anne, "Colonial Cornish", MA, Melbourne, 1985, p. 213.

Ballarat, rather than allowing recognition of a specifically Cornish contribution.

Cornish wrestling[109] appeared across a gamut of different sporting events, and, unlike the other Celtic groups, celebration of a national day did not occur. In Ballarat, generally, society seemed more intent on proclaiming themselves "British" rather than Welsh or Cornish or Scottish or Irish. Successful calls for subscriptions to Relief Funds for the distress in Ireland and Cornwall illustrate clearly the expressed sentiments of Ballarat residents to provide aid to the needy, regardless of race or creed. The fact of being Cornish or Scottish or Irish was seen as irrelevant in the face of a greater need. At a Public Meeting in the Alfred Hall in 1880, much was said about the largesse and the well-known internationalism of Ballarat residents:

> Major Smith … jocularly remarked that he had been twitted on not being an Irishman, and he was not, nor yet a Welshman, nor a Scotchman, but an Englishman, and combined the qualities of the lot.[110]

And

> When the Cornish relief movement was on foot, everyone seemed to be a Cornishman, and tonight everyone seemed to be an Irishman.[111]

Such statements attest to the idea that the experience of each of the ethnic groups, including the English, was a similar one. All were subject to similar

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[109] Cornish wrestling: an ancient Celtic form of wrestling, still practiced widely in Brittany and Cornwall. The priority is to throw one's opponent from the standing position onto his back; a successful 'throw' must ensure that three out of the four body points (shoulders and hips) hit the ground simultaneously. Thanks to Richard Croggon, Lightweight Champion of Cornwall,
1969, for this information.

[110] *Ballarat Star*, 15 January, 1880, p. 6.

[111] *Ballarat Star*, 15 January, 1880, p. 6.

pressures to maintain ethnic allegiances, and the English, in common with the Cornish, Irish, Scottish and Welsh, suppressed their ethnicity in favour of loyalty to the Empire. At the same meeting, reference was made to the

> superiority of the feeling actuating us here as compared with the feelings of the savage nation. Actions like these would make the Empire a living reality.[112]

Parochialism to the former ethnic group was felt to be an unworthy and small-minded emotion in their newly adopted and prosperous city of Ballarat:

> They had money to spare in Ballarat, and he was quite sure that the old reputation of her people for charitable acts would be well maintained.[113]

The Cornish positioned themselves to become part of the fabric of a new society, which was, after all, a logical and desirable outcome of emigration. In so doing they inadvertently lost an integral part of their Cornishness. Qualities which might be specifically defined as 'Cornish' were subsumed, by the end of the century, by the larger and loftier considerations of Empire, and Federation. Pride in being a part of a larger and more glorious entity transformed into an energy which overrode the diminishing perceptions of being specifically Cornish. Ballarat had achieved a national status, at least in its own eyes, and this achievement had been accomplished on the backs of the gold seekers - amongst whom must be numbered the steadfast Methodists and skilled miners known as the Cousins from Cornwall.

[112] *Ballarat Star*, 15 January, 1880, p. 6.
[113] *Ballarat Star*, 15 January, 1880, p. 6.

CHAPTER

3

"Wales or Ballarat?"

Conflicting perceptions of Welshness on Ballarat, 1851 - 1901

The Ballarat environment in the latter half of the nineteenth century was notable, like other gold cities,[1] for its multi-cultural diversity; the cousins from Cornwall co-existed with other equally vigorous national groups, and the people from Wales formed a culturally significant part of this ethnic mix.

This chapter describes the strength of the Welsh intellectual heritage, and its recreation in nineteenth century Ballarat, via the continuation of the great eisteddfod tradition. The chapter also identifies the Welsh connection to the strong tradition of non-conformism - a tradition which, in Ballarat, was being jointly established with the Cornish. It traces the attempts of the Welsh community in Ballarat to transfer the perceived excellence of Welsh culture into a colonial society. The concessions made to achieve such an outcome and the exigencies of survival in a goldfields society became the means by which the pride of *cymru* (Wales) was compromised. In the same way that the Cornish contribution can be measured in terms of the nature of their eventual and successful adaptation to a larger, more comprehensive unity, so the people from Wales fell victim to their own eagerness to become part of the

[1] "Every large diggings had its Irish, Cornish, and German Towns. Even members of small national groups seemed able to find a few countrymen with whom to fraternize. … By the end of the fifties seven out of every ten people in Victoria were overseas-born, all of whom shared the experience of migration and the tussle between the old and the new."
Broome, *Arriving,* pp.80 -81, and p. 93.

Figure 14 Map of Wales

new world in which they found themselves. In an ironic twist, the reconciliation of a vibrant Welsh cultural and linguistic heritage with a newly forming colonial society resulted in the ultimate loss of the very Welshness which it had been the aim to sustain. The price of unity and assimilation for the Welsh in Ballarat tended to be a growing obscurity. Whilst the remnants of a Welsh cultural legacy in Ballarat are evident in the survival of the eisteddfod tradition, for the most part, by the end of the century, the emigrants from Wales dwindled, and their importance as an individual ethnic group on Ballarat diminished.

> In general, industrialisation and the growth of radical non-conformity were the forces that created modern Wales.[2]

The kingdom of Wales lies at the western edge of the British Isles: a squat peninsula, with an area of 8,019 square miles (20,768 kilometres). It has, within living memory, almost always regarded itself as geographically distinct and culturally superior to the rest of Britain. Its geographical location on the extreme western fringe of Europe has given Wales a particular and unique environment, which in turn is responsible for the development of a singular and remarkable cultural heritage.[3] The existence of a different language - where "Welcome to Wales" becomes "*croeso I cymru*"- also sets the country apart, and has been historically important in maintaining a sense of separateness.

The story of the history of the Welsh nation might be summed up in terms of the quest for the survival of the Celtic culture; from 300 BC, when the Celtic

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[2] Hughes, Arthur F.: "Welsh migrants in Australia: Language, Maintenance and Cultural Transmission", PhD., Department of Education, University of Adelaide, 1994, p. 78.

empire represented perhaps the most dominant and unified empire in Europe, to the tattered remnants which survived the advances of the armies of Rome. The Celtic races of Britain, physically separated from the ravages inflicted on the Celtic tribes in Europe, survived several hundred years longer, particularly in regions like Wales, where the distinctive language of the Celts was retained and survives today as Welsh. Myths which have become known as "the matter of Britain" speak of a mystic figure (King Arthur) who was supposed to have briefly united the fiercely independent Celtic tribes before their ultimate disintegration into isolated and relatively ineffectual cultural units. The power and popularity of the Arthurian story is probably most significant because of the strength with which it speaks of the deeply-felt need of the Celtic races to survive. Legends of *Arthur* remain firmly and happily entrenched in the historic imagination of the world, and whilst Arthurian associations are found everywhere in the historical Celtic strongholds of Cornwall, Brittany and Wales, it is possibly Wales which has the strongest claims to ownership of the core of the "Matter of Britain". The survival of the Arthurian myths serves to highlight the emerging historical image of Wales: that of a fiercely independent, isolated and separate kingdom which developed on the fringe of more central and 'civilised' cultures - almost in spite of those cultures, and definitely, on occasions, in opposition to them.

Wales' historical determination to retain its particular culture, despite the incursions of foreign powers (especially the English), built up a tradition of resistance and a strong sense of a belief in a higher destiny which survived almost in spite of - or perhaps because of - conflict and political disintegration. Despite political subjugation, a sense of Welshness did survive the centuries, but it was the devastating Acts of Union, 1536 and 1542, enacted during the reign of Henry VIII, which most effectively silenced the defiant call for Welsh

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[3] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, Chicago: Benton, 1974, 1987, p. 118.

sovereignty. By these Acts, Wales ceased to exist as a separate body-politic, and was effectively incorporated into the English state:

> An Act for Laws and Justices to be ministered in Wales in like form as it is in this realm: His Highness [in witness]… of the singular love and favour that he bears towards his subjects of this said dominion of Wales, and intending to reduce them to the perfect order, notice, and knowledge of the laws of this his Realm, and utterly extirpate all and singular the sinister usages and customs differing from the same. ... hath … ordained, enacted and established that his said country or dominion of Wales shall stand and continue forever from henceforth incorporated, united and annexed to and with his Realm of England.[4]

It became clear during the time of the Tudor rule that language was the key to the most significant and meaningful expressions of Welsh nationalism. It developed as the symbol of 'Welshness', the yardstick of Welsh nationalism. The effect of Tudor rule was to realign the relative importance of Welsh, such that the retention of the Welsh language was relegated to and largely sustained in the lower classes - the *gwerin* - whilst those who wished to advance in the newly created professional classes learnt and spoke English - henceforth the language of 'getting on'. [5]

Yet, despite English overlordism, the sleeping giant of Welsh nationalism survived, to be re-awakened later in the sixteenth century, during Henry VIII's violent break from the Church of Rome. One of the most significant landmarks in the consolidation of the Welsh language as an expression of spiritual power came in 1588, with the appearance of William Morgan's translation of the entire Bible into Welsh . This was a corollary of the need to consolidate the Protestant faith in Britain, and was a huge victory for the

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[4] Williams, Peter N., *A Brief History of Wales*, 1996, [Online] Available: http://britannia.com/wales/whist.html; Chapter 6, p.1.
[5] Hughes, Arthur F, "Welsh migrants in Australia …" , PhD. Adelaide, 1994, p. 64.

Welsh nationalists and humanists who had long nurtured the nationalist ethic:

> Alone among the Celtic nations in securing the Scriptures in the vernacular within half a century of the Reformation, the Welsh people had scored a success of profound significance for the future of the language and the sense of nationhood.[6]

In fact, Arthur Hughes pronounced the act of translating the Bible into Welsh as "Arguably, ….. the single most important contribution to the preservation of the Welsh language."[7]

Divisive Tudor political policies, and the translation of the Bible into Welsh, caused the relegation of Welsh culture and the Welsh language to the culture and language of the lower classes, the tenant yeomanry, and therefore, in a sense, effectively sidelined the traditional base of 'Welshness'. It was a position from which it never recovered. The advent of the eighteenth century brought with it several major developments which could be described as defining and identifying the nature of Wales's entrance into the 'modern' world. As with Cornwall, two of the most important developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Wales were the rise of Methodism, and the onset of the Industrial Revolution. These were the significant factors which shaped the development of Welsh society, and shaped the culture which was ultimately brought to Australia in the middle of the nineteenth century. Historians seem to be agreed on the momentousness of this particular period of change in the history of Wales:

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[6] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* p. 126.
[7] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia", p 66; also see Vaughan-Thomas, W, *Wales: a History* London, Joseph, 1985, p. 156.

> … the radical transformation of Welsh society during the course of the eighteenth century. This revolution - for it was surely revolution - and the consolidation of its results in the nineteenth century, shaped many of the values which the Welsh were to bring to Australia.[8]

And

> All periods, of course, are 'periods of change', but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the changes which the people of Wales underwent between 1770 and 1850 were of a fundamental nature. It was as if the nation was changing gear …[9]

By the nineteenth century, Methodism had logically developed as "the main denomination within Welsh non-conformity[10]; its successful establishment meant that it provided the vehicle through which cultural and language skills were disseminated, and thus the spirit of Welsh separateness which was such a feature of nineteenth century Wales was, in a fashion, consolidated.

Concurrent with the emergence of Methodism as a force shaping Welsh society in the eighteenth century was what has variously been described as a kind of cultural renaissance, a 'literary and antiquarian' national-romantic movement, a 're-discovery' of the so-called ancient Celtic roots of Wales. This was a process of enshrining in 'immortal' prose the glorious truths, half-truths, and often sheer fantasies which made up the patchwork of princes, battles, legendary heroes, and ancient bards of Welsh history. Such a process, according to Lloyd Kramer, constituted the stuff of nation building. He noted that the origins of most nations are "shrouded in obscurity or symbolised by

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[8] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia … ", 1994, p. 69.
[9] Davies, John, *A History of Wales,* London, Allen Lane, Penguin, 1993, p. 320.
[10] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia….", 1994, p.69.

semi-mythological figures"[11], and points out that "all nations depend on myths of origins and that these myths flourish because the early history of nations is unknown or forgotten." According to Kramer, this process of forgetting the "problematic, brutal aspects" of a nation's origins makes it possible to "celebrate the virtues of its founding heroes" and to "generate a mysterious sense of solidarity that unites people in "the feeling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future." [12] The power of this kind of myth-building is that it utilises powerful figures, symbols, and texts from a nation's often relatively unknown past and attributes to them a new stature and importance. It then makes these images available to a much wider range of the population who are then able to have an "imagined"[13] sense of their nation as a separate identity of some importance.

According to this model, it is therefore possible for an intellectual elite to construct a national image which finds general acceptance amongst the population, without the population necessarily having any direct knowledge or experience of the basis of that image. In order to create a sense of nationhood according to Kramer's model, it is necessary to have a fairly well defined intellectual elite who 'interprets' the new/old national symbols to the rest of the populace, thus:

> … the nationalist creed requires a language, a literature, and a group of interpreters who sustain the narrative of the nation like theologians or priests sustain the narrative of a religion. Nationalism is a religion, in

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[11] Kramer, Lloyd,"Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism", *Journal of the History of Ideas,* July 1997, Vol. 58, No. 3, p. 532.
[12] Kramer, "Historical Narratives …", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, July 1997, 58, 3,p. 533.
[13] See Benedict Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities:*

other words, that relies on the languages and narratives of intellectual elites.[14]

Hughes identifies a Welsh cultural 'renaissance" in the eighteenth century which appeared to fit this model very well.[15] It could not be called a 'popular' movement, since it rested mainly in the hands - and minds - of an intellectual elite, many of whom were based in London. The revival of Welsh literature and Welsh ideals of nationhood was largely a response to the perceived loss of identity in the face of increased Anglicization. As well, the onset of Methodism was seen as a definite hindrance to the performance of traditional Welsh music and poetry. Drawing on an almost mythologised 'classical' past, and reaching beyond the restrictions of 'foreign' English government, and the stultifying solemnity of Methodism, the writers, poets, musicians and scholars of eighteenth century Wales became part of an astonishing cultural revival.

Reacting against the almost mandatory sobriety and inherent 'dullness' of Methodism, this culturally elitist group pursued with vigour and commitment the resurrection of an ideal of Welsh nationhood. The movement was largely based in London, with the founding, in 1751, of the Society of the Cymmrodorion, devoted to the study of Welsh literature and history. This was followed by the much more radical and populist Gwyneddigion in the 1770s, and the Cymreigyddion, in 1794. All of these societies were London-based, and were predominantly important for the attention they drew to the singular and particular qualities of Welsh culture. Inevitably, of course, by the very act of writing about Welsh 'culture', the protagonists began to define it, and therefore drew attention to the fact of

[14] Kramer, "Historical Narratives …", p. 534.
[15] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia…", pp. 74 - 75.

both its presence and its uniqueness. This was a concept which was carried, along with staunch Methodism, into the nineteenth century.

One of the most important 'products' of this Welsh cultural renaissance was the emergence of the *eisteddfod*, that "most characteristic Welsh cultural institution"[16]. Literally translated to mean "an assembly of bards" it was basically a formal recognition given to the hitherto fairly casual *ad hoc* gatherings of poets and musicians held, in the eighteenth century (and in earlier centuries[17]), to celebrate 'the arts'. The first organised eisteddfod was held in Llangollen in 1789 under the auspices of the Gwyneddigion. Conducted entirely in the Welsh language, the institution developed into the nineteenth century *Gorsedd,* (1819) which described the symbolic ritual which accompanied the chairing of the bard. Hughes claims that the whole *gorsedd* ceremony, with its robes, torques and other Celtic/Druidic regalia was an invention of Edward Williams, 1747 - 1826, who "sought to prove that Welsh literary traditions had continued unbroken since druidical times."[18] To locate such manifestations deep in the misty past gave them authority: the idea of an unbroken tradition of creative 'Welshness' stretching back to druidical times seemed to the *litterateurs* of the eighteenth century to lend to such cultural institutions as *eisteddfodau* a respectability and a strength which newly created institutions might have lacked.

This 'nationalist' revival surged again in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the Cambrian Archaeological Association was formed (1846),

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[16] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia ….", p. 75.
[17] "The Welsh eisteddfod tradition can be traced (with some uncertainty) to a cognate event held under the patronage of Lord Rhys Ap Gruffydd (one of the last princes of South Wales) in 1176. The Eisteddfod of which there is documented record however is that held at Camarthen in 1451." Stephens, M. (ed.) , *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales* Oxford, OUP, 1986, p. 172; quoted in Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia …", p. 76.

and the Cymmrodorion Society and the National Eisteddfod were revivified. The great choirs came onto the scene, and every Welshman seemed to be a hymn composer or a songwriter.[19] However, as Williams points out, much of this so-called 'revival' suffered from an excess of sentimentality and superficial patriotism, and in fact was rather "an English and largely middle-class cum populist culture translated and transmuted."[20] Sadly, this celebration of the Welsh language, and a particular and uniquely Welsh culture, in fact confirmed the separateness of the Welsh people from the English, and thus from the language and culture of business and success. As Williams points out, it "locked Welsh up in a particular world which was rapidly becoming marginal."[21] The encroaching Anglicisation of their language and culture was more than their 'Welshness' could stand, and, as Williams reports, by the late nineteenth century nearly half of the population of Wales knew no Welsh. Williams defines this, like Hughes, as a cultural catastrophe.

Nevertheless, the Welsh themselves continued to believe in the strength of their language, and to celebrate so-called Welshness in eistedfoddau and in literature. Furthermore, it was an extension of this passionate - if misguided - belief in the sacredness and historical validity of their cultural heritage which emboldened the Welsh to carry their 'culture', with all the zealous fervour of a religious cult, to the farthest corners of the earth. Even in Ballarat the myth was perpetuated: in the late nineteenth century, "Caradoc" wrote to the local newspaper fired with passion for Welsh heritage, and saw nothing strange in

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[18] Hughes, "Welsh migrants in Australia ….", p. 76.
[19] Williams, Gwyn, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh*, Black Raven Press, 1985, pp. 208 - 209.
[20] Williams, *When was Wales?*, 1985, p. 210.
[21] Williams, *When was Wales?*, 1985, p. 210.

placing Ballarat at the end of a continuous historical process which began with the Druids:

> The Welsh people have, from the earliest ages of their history, been passionately fond of music and poetry, fragments of the latter having come down to the present day from the Druidical age. The harp was in use at a congress (eisteddfod) held under the patronage of Maelgwyn, King of North Wales, in the sixth century; but the pipe and lute are mentioned as their earliest instruments. The most ancient triadic memorials of Wales are full of allusions to the national custom of "gathering of the clans with the horn." In music, Welshmen could go back to the sixth century - the time of King Arthur. Now, this King Arthur was no myth, but a real historical personage, whose castle, called Zindagel, was at Kilgerran, county of Pembroke, South Wales, of which Wharton sings:-
>
> > Stately the feast, and high the cheer,
> > Girt with many an armed peer,
> > And canopied with golden pall,
> > Amid Kilgerran's Castle hall;
> > Illumining the vaulted roof,
> > A thousand torches flamed aloof;
> > The storied tapestry was hung,
> > With minstrelsy the rafters rung,
> > Of Harps that with reflected light
> > From the proud gallery glittered bright.
>
> Thus music as well as poetry has always been interwoven with the civilisation of Wales, and become an indelible trait in their national character; and many airs which are received so enthusiastically in the present day were sung among the hills and valleys of wild Wales a thousand years ago, and as they were associated with the most stirring periods of their history, they have stamped their image upon all the more modern productions. Hence it is that the music of Wales is peculiar - that the music of the Welsh is their own. [22]

[22] *Ballarat Courier*, 27 February, 1877, p. 4; Letter to the Editor, by "Caradoc".

There was, therefore, in eighteenth century Wales, both an important cultural renewal, although limited to a fairly small absentee percentage of the population, and a more populist religious revolution, which spread Methodism throughout Wales, and confirmed the Dissenting tradition there. Thus it was that the challenges of the nineteenth century - industrialisation, emigration, and all the attendant social problems, were met by a nation which, culturally at least, was just beginning to demonstrate a vigorous self-confidence both in its past, and in its future. In contrast to the predicaments in which Cornwall found herself as the century progressed, the kingdom of Wales found itself poised on the crest of the mighty wave of industrial expansion and wealth which washed over Britain and Europe. As the century progressed, this wave of change altered forever the nature of all over which it passed. Some of the tidal debris even found itself washed up on the shores of Australia.

Wales in the Nineteenth Century

In 1847 the upper reaches of the Rhondda Fawr were described as having

> glorious hills … the emerald greenness of the meadows below were most refreshing …. The air aromatic with wild flowers, and mountain plants. A Sabbath stillness reigns.[23]

Within fifty years this had changed dramatically, and the twin valleys of the Rhondda had become part of the most important mining area in the world.
The presence of coal, iron and copper, and the forces of industrialisation which the development of these items unleashed, encouraged the expansion of whole physical areas of Wales, as well as determining a pattern of

[23] Keen and Burgum, *Wales*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1997, p. 11.

migration both within the country, and overseas which changed forever the face of the country.

By 1851 Wales had 1,163,139 inhabitants; by 1914 it had 2,523,500 - an increase of 117 per cent in sixty-three years.[24] In 1851 the coal industry was the second biggest source of employment, with around thirty-five per cent employed in agriculture, and ten per cent in coal. By 1914, this situation had reversed itself, and coal employed over thirty-five per cent, while agriculture accounted for only about ten per cent. The population distribution of Wales in this century also changed dramatically as a direct result of this shift in employment patterns.

Simply speaking, the twin factors of industrialisation and urbanisation brought about the transformation of Wales from a predominantly rural society based largely on agriculture, to a significantly industrialised, urban state. Most of the large scale industrial expansion took place in the south of the country with the growth and development of the South Wales coalfield in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. By 1827, substantial ironworks along the northern rim of the coalfield were furnishing half of Britain's iron exports, whilst copper-smelting in the Swansea-Neath district (in the south-west) developed the town of Swansea as an important metallurgical centre. The growth of the coal fields of south Wales,[25] particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, was dramatic, and came about partly as a result of a huge world-wide demand triggered by the British Admiralty's firm

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[24] Davies, John, *A History of Wales,* Allen Lane, Penguin Press, London, 1993, p. 398.
[25] "The South Wales coalfield … was developed in the 19th century as one of the premier mining regions of Britain, and such urban settlements as the Rhondda, with bleak, tightly packed rows of terraced housing strung out along the narrow valleys, are perhaps among the most widely known characteristics of Wales, " *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1974, 1987, p. 120.

acknowledgment that the coal from Aberdare was the ideal fuel for the British navy.[26]

By 1913 Cardiff was the world's largest exporter of steam coal. In the quarrying districts of north west Wales, similar developments, on a somewhat smaller scale, were taking place as lead, silver and gold were mined.
Population in Wales in those years of the nineteenth century reflected and confirmed this dramatic industrial growth. Significantly, the most important aspect of 'migration' in Wales in this century was the internal migration, "the footloose surplus from rural Wales who colonised their own country." Unlike Scotland, Ireland and Cornwall, Wales did not witness a major exodus of people *outside* the country; rather, the movement of population was internal, that is, from the rural counties of the north and west to the industrialised valleys of South Wales. This is a significant factor for anyone considering the history of Wales in the nineteenth century. The negative impulses which surrounded the need for members of the other Celtic populations to look to other parts of the world for spiritual and physical sustenance did not, at least initially, exist in Wales in the nineteenth century.

The influx of population into the new industrial areas - Merthyr Tydfil and Swansea, for example - actually brought a substantial influx of Welsh speakers to these areas, and helped to develop a strong and binding sense of 'Welshness', defined in part by the use of the Welsh language. Arthur Hughes (quoting Thomas[27]) suggests that it was the new wealth created by industry which "financed the construction of nonconformist chapels along the length and breadth of Wales, the publishing of unprecedented numbers of Welsh

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[26] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974, 1987, p. 400.
[27] Thomas, B., *Migration and Economic Growth A Study of Great Britain and the Atlantic Economy,* 2nd Ed., CUP, Cambridge,1973.

books and newspapers, the annual National Eisteddfod and a host of other developments which were to sustain Welsh culture well into the twentieth century."[28]

However, Hughes argues that the case for the importance of industrialisation in sustaining Welsh culture and language cannot, in the long term, be sustained. Despite the obvious short-term increase in the use of Welsh, long-term, he believes, other factors involving industrialisation were more directly influential in the growth and development of Welsh culture. Hughes is supported in this by the work of John Davies, who points out that "in 1850, two out of three inhabitants of Wales spoke Welsh - a total of 750,000 people - and most of them had no knowledge of any other language. By 1914, there were almost a million Welsh speakers; yet they represented only two-fifths of the population, and four out of five of them had some command of English."[29] In other words, despite the overall increase in the number of people speaking Welsh, percentage-wise relative to the rest of the population, that number had actually decreased by the beginning of the twentieth century. Industrialisation had ostensibly developed 'Welshness', but really undermined it.

Hughes argues that the "most enduring" legacy of industrialisation in Wales was the division of the country along a north-south cultural divide. The more rural, Welsh-speaking north began to see itself as the custodian of Welsh culture, whilst the south, struggling to deal with the huge issues of population increase, industrialisation, Anglicising, and "cultural and linguistic dispossession"[30] began to seek answers outside traditional sources.

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[28] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 79.
[29] Davies, *History of Wales,* p. 399.
[30] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 81.

Demographically alone, the population shifts over the half century (1850 - 1914) were dramatic, and highlight the problems which confronted the southern counties of Wales. In 1851 the country was, broadly speaking, fairly evenly divided into three - a third of the population lived in the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth, a third in the rest of the southern counties and a third in the six counties of the north. By 1914 the situation had reversed: the proportion living in Glamorgan and Monmouth had doubled and the proportion living in the two other regions had halved.[31]

To trace the development of Welsh culture into the twentieth century involves an exploration of issues which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that it involves a discussion of the development of what Arthur Hughes calls "a Marxist cross-cultural ideology"[32] which, taken to its historical extreme, was to render South Wales "the heartland of British socialism in the 1920 and 1930s."[33] In the nineteenth century, people living in the newly-created industrialised areas of South Wales faced their own challenges - those of a culturally disenfranchised, socially fragmented and physically deprived society. The trauma of drastic and accelerated change was a major formative factor in the development of the cultural ethos which was part of the social baggage which was transported with Welsh emigrants to the goldfields of Australia in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Welsh Emigration to Australia in the Nineteenth Century

> It seems that economic considerations above all motivate the Welshman to emigrate, not those to do with traditions of his nation or his language or his religion. 'Bread and Cheese' come first, and that is

[31] Davies, *History of Wales,* p. 399.
[32] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 81.
[33] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 82.

> what decides whether he makes his home in his own country or in an alien land.[34]

John Davies, in his *History of Wales* points out that the population growth in Wales in the latter half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century can be at least partially attributed to the massive industrialisation process of the Industrial Revolution which occurred in Britain in the same period.[35] Between 1770 and 1851 Wales had doubled its population, from 500,000 to 1,163,000. In contrast to the realities of both Cornwall and Ireland, on the whole the economic situation of the Welsh economy was such that it could actually support this dramatically increased population. Where literally thousands of Cornish and Irish men and women - and indeed, families - were forced to seek an alternative homeland across the seas because their native land could no longer support them, the Welsh, by and large, remained relatively comfortable within their own shores.

The bitter experiences of Ireland and Cornwall, as well as the Highland clearances in Scotland, provided the compelling reasons necessary for those people to emigrate, whereas the situation was not nearly so extreme in Wales. This is not to say that there were not still some pressures for emigration: as Davies points out, there were certainly regions of Wales where "the upsurge in population exceeded the increase in resources"[36]. Lloyd, the noted Welsh historian, is anxious to dispel the romanticised version of Wales so often promoted. He writes:

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[34] M. Williams, *Cymry Awstralia,* Llandybie: Gwasg Christopher Davies, 1983, p. 167; as quoted in Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 55.

[35] "It would … be misleading to assert that the Demographic Revolution occurred as result of the Industrial Revolution (or *vice versa*), but it would also be unwise to deny that there were linkages between the one and the other." Davies, *History of Wales,* pp. 322 - 323.

> Wales was not in the first half of the nineteenth century, as it has been sometimes portrayed, a land studded with considerate and enlightened landlords, genial and well-meaning squires, presiding over a contented peasantry in the rural areas any more than it was, in the industrial districts, a land of happy colliers inclined to sing on their way to work, in four part harmony, with breath enough to sing on their way from the pits after a twelve hour shift! [37]

The appalling living conditions in the industrial wastelands of the Rhondda valleys certainly motivated Welshmen to seek a better alternative elsewhere:

> The Swansea valley forms no bad representation of the infernal regions, for the smell aids the eye. Large groups of odd chimneys and rackety flues emit sulphureous arsenical smoke or pure flame; a dense canopy overhangs the scene for several miles, rendered more horrible by the peculiar lurid glare … All vegetation is blasted in the valley and adjoining hills … On a clear day the smoke of the Swansea valley may be seen at a distance of forty or fifty miles and sometimes appears like a dense thunder cloud. [38]

Yet

> industrialisation meant work and many who might otherwise have contemplated emigration sought and found work in the extractive industries throughout Wales and in the iron works and smelters of south Wales.[39]

Johnston identifies the peak of English/Welsh emigration (there were no separate figures for the Welsh) in 1854 (91,000), and bottoming out in 1861

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[36] Davies, *History of Wales,* p. 323.
[37] Lloyd, Lewis: *Australians from Wales*, Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon, 1988, p. 74.
[38] Charles Frederick Cliffe, 1848, quoted in Rees, Ronald, "The Great Copper Trials", *History Today,* Vol. 43, December 1993, p. 38.
[39] Lloyd, *Australians from Wales*, p. 74.

(22,000), before rising again. In 1863 61,200 Welsh and English emigrants departed British shores; in Wales …

> Scores of persons, chiefly able-bodied men, are leaving weekly, the majority of them to America.

Johnston notes that this "continual drain of emigration" continued until the end of 1866, dropping in 1867, and peaking thereafter (123,000) in 1873.[40] The high point of Welsh emigration reached in the seventies was largely as a response to significant deterioration in the iron and steel industries, and serious industrial action affecting both the coal and iron industries. However, emigration figures did not entirely reflect these uncomfortable conditions at home, partly because the most important destination for migrants, America, was itself experiencing an economic downturn, and thus did not offer an attractive alternative for those seeking a solution to their economic woes. Many would-be Americans turned to Australia as an alternative destination, but despite this, emigration figures from England and Wales to Australia fell to a low of sixty-three thousand in 1877. This trend seems to confirm what has already been suggested: that "harsh economic conditions at home [Wales] did not necessarily lead to increased emigration."[41] Towards the end of the century, industrial and agricultural conditions deteriorated further in Wales, and emigration increased: "the 1880s was the peak decade of the nineteenth century for emigration by citizens of the United Kingdom" [42]

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[40] Baines, Dudley, *Migration in a Mature Economy,* Cambridge, CUP, 1985, pp. 301 - 302; quoted in Johnston, W. Ross: "The Welsh Diaspora: Emigrating Around the World in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Llafur, Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History*, Vol. 6, (2), 1993, p. 51.

[41] Johnston, "The Welsh Diaspora: Emigrating Around the World…" *Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History,* Vol. 6, (2), 1993, p.51.

America remained the preferred destination, but of the remaining choices (Canada, New Zealand, and the Australian colonies) Victoria was almost always the preferred destination, with the lure of gold a strong incentive to prospective emigrants.[43]

However, on the whole, as Ronald Rees points out, most people were contented to remain, understanding that the mines and smelters, with the industrial pollution which came with them, were the price of prosperity and security. It was, in fact, their bread and butter, and they were not, on the whole, inclined to bite the hand that fed them. Migration from Wales, therefore, was not the huge issue which it was in Cornwall and Ireland. As Davies argues, it was not "as central to the experience of the Welsh" predominantly because industrial Wales could offer a livelihood to much of the rural surplus.[44]

Welsh emigrants to Australia, therefore, should not necessarily be viewed in quite the same light as those from the other Celtic nations. The bitterness and tragedy of Ireland, and the hardship of necessity which compelled the Cornish to come to the new land, was not quite so evident in the Welsh

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[42] Johnston, "The Welsh Diaspora: Emigrating Around the World…" *Society for the Study of Welsh Labour History,* Vol. 6, (2), 1993 p. 52.

[43] Johnston, "The Welsh Diaspora", p. 54: "The combined Australian colonies in the early 1860s stood ahead of Canada as the choice of emigrants from the British Isles who wanted to stay within the Empire; this was a hang-over from the rush of enthusiasm stirred up by the gold discoveries of the previous decade. At this stage, Victoria ... was the leading recipient of those emigrants, and usually did not need to make very special efforts to attract attention. … The intake grew to over 20.000 in 1863. This Victorian lead persisted from the 1850s - 60s into the early 1870s, with an interruption in 1865-66. Between 1874 and 1876 inclusive Victoria fell back to second place, but then reasserted its primacy in the later 1870s, and through the 1880s, except for the year 1883. Through the rest of the 1880s the annual Victorian intake from the United Kingdom was always above 15,000."

[44] Davies, *History of Wales,* p. 323.

homeland; the ambiguity of their emigration is often reflected in the behaviour and writings of those who did finish up in Australia (or Ballarat).
In his extensive correspondence home to Wales from Ballarat in the late nineteenth century, Robert Lewis, the cordial manufacturer (of Roland and Lewis, Cordial makers) writes of the type of emigrant which he perceives as being necessary for Australia, and in so doing, suggests the reasons why Welshmen might journey to Ballarat …

> I don't think it is of any use for him [*Lewis' nephew, John Evans*] to come out here. It wants people of great energy and perseverance - it won't do for a man to spend half a day scandalising in a Blacksmith shop or reading newspapers in the Middle of the Day. Squatters ride hundred miles a day. Farmers work hard. This is not a country for a lazy man…[45]
> … This is a fine country for a hard working man I should like to see more of those people in Wales that don't get meat only now and then. It grieves me to see so much meat thrown away. I should advice [sic] all those who are not doing well to come here and those that are comfortable to stop where they are.[46]

The reasons why people emigrated are almost impossible to ascertain, although certain insights can be gained from the writings of those who were literate enough, and had sufficient motivation, to leave a written record of their journey. As well, the actions and lifestyles of emigrants once they arrived at their place of destination can also be legitimately used as a guide to an understanding of the expectations and values which they brought with them to the new land. We are fortunate with the Welsh, in that we are able to study in some detail the cultural institutions which defined the legacy which they were to bequeath to later generations. Measuring the Cornish influence on Ballarat comes through a study of Ballarat's mining heritage, and through

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[45] Lewis, Robert, Letters, MS Collection, National Library of Australia, Lewis to Williams, 23 April 1863.

an understanding of the non-conformist 'chapel' culture which developed. The Welsh contribution may be understood in terms of a very different kind of evidence.

The new physical and social environment in which they found themselves inexorably altered the conscious application of Welsh 'culture' on Ballarat; like the Cornish, the Welsh were flung into a social melting pot which subtly altered the very core of their Welshness.

> …in Australia in the nineteenth century … the Welsh were distinguished by their adherence to two fundamental core values. These were the Welsh language and the Welsh version of nonconformity.[47]

The social and cultural leadership of the Welsh communities in Australia, particularly those on the Ballarat goldfields, shaped and were shaped by the nature of the social pressures which they found there. The faithful re-creation of 'sacred' Welsh institutions like the Eisteddfod, the celebrations of St. David's Day, and the sanctioning of a non-conformist ethos via the establishment of numerous chapels, were significant on two levels: firstly, for the overt and obvious importance which the Welsh attached to the attempt to reproduce familiar institutions in an unfamiliar environment, and secondly for the more subtle changes which that same environment wrought on those social institutions - so that they were at once the same, and yet different from those in the homeland.

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[46] Lewis, Robert, Letters, NLA, Lewis to Williams, 19 May, 1854.
[47] *Yr Australydd*, Volume IV, Number 10, October, 1870; quoted in Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia", p. 176.

The major concern of the leaders of the Welsh community in Ballarat seemed to be the transplantation of the Welsh 'culture', and the success or otherwise which attended this. It is significant that when the Welsh people were discussed in the Ballarat community, it was in terms of their recognisable Welshness, and the possibilities which this might bring to the new land. The Welsh themselves seemed to find nothing unusual in the idea of representing themselves largely in terms of a language and a culture - in which they differ markedly from the Cornish.

Welsh community leaders emerged in Ballarat in response, quite often, to conflicting views on Welsh culture and its transplanted identity. These men did not always speak for every Welshman in the society; in fact, their vociferous utterances on the nature of the Welsh contribution to their new society were more often than not in response to a perceived fear of the loss of that very identity. Thus the outspoken comments of the Welsh language newspaper *Yr Australydd*[48] more often than not thundered against what it perceived as the *failure* of the Welsh people to honour their language and their culture.

> "*Yr Hen Gymraeg yn marw yn Victoria*" [The Old Language is Dying in Victoria]
>
> Our beloved old language! - the language of our ancestors, of our mothers, of our happy youth, the language of our emotions and our hearts, that which is essential to our very being is dying … Does this terrible reality not stir within us feelings of shame, of grief, of guilt and of self-condemnation? …

[48] This Welsh-Australian newspaper was published between 1866 and 1872, alongside *Yr Ymelydd* , 1874 - 1876; they were edited by William Meirion Evans and Theophilus Williams, both of Ballarat, and certainly could be seen to express the attitudes and concerns of at least some of the Welsh community in Victoria at that time.

> Our language is the most vital element of our nationality; to the extent that we lose it, to that extent is our nationality being extinguished. What reason will there possibly be for calling ourselves Welsh … when we will have lost the language of the Welsh…?
>
> Is it by accident that we are losing our Welshness? Nothing of the sort. It would not have taken a prophet, even several years ago to predict this present calamity. Seven years back, we were teaching English to our children in the Sunday schools when there was no reason at all for it. … Teaching them English at that stage is what now makes it necessary to teach them [everything] through the medium of that language; yes, it is the fruit of that folly which now threatens to eliminate our cultural identity, and which will succeed unless we promptly adopt measures to prevent it.[49]

This was written in Welsh, and intended for Welsh eyes; it was publicly expressed, but only to a Welsh-speaking public. Yet, from earliest days on Ballarat, the Welsh seemed to be determined to speak, not only to their own people, but to the rest of society about their Welshness: using the vehicle of the eisteddfod, the Welsh in Ballarat could possibly lay claim to the creation of the city which held the most eisteddfodau and eisteddfod-like 'celebrations' in Australia in the nineteenth century.

Historians vary about when, and how many eisteddfodau were actually held in Ballarat; Georgina Binns,[50] maintains that the earliest recorded eisteddfod in Ballarat was held at the Welsh Chapel, Bakery Hill, on Christmas Day 1857; Withers[51] gives 1855 as the year of the first eisteddfod, but unfortunately does not back up his claim with evidence. Theophilus Williams and John Humffray, writing in March 1886, claimed that "the Ballarat Eisteddfod was initiated in 1863 by Messrs. Robert Lewis, Henry Davies, Theos. Williams,

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[49] *Yr Australydd*, Vol. 1V, No. 10, October, 1870; quoted in Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia", p. 186.

[50] Binns, Georgina, "Musical Aspects of Eisteddfods and the Royal South Street Competitions in Ballarat to 1900", B.Mus. (Hons.), Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1982.

Ellis Richards, Timothy Thomas, R. B. Williams, John Morgan, John Morris, and others."[52] Certainly, the *Miner and Weekly Star* documents meetings of the Welsh Literary Society at Sebastopol Hill as early as March, 1857, where papers on topics such as "Victoria, Past and Present" and the Aboriginal people were given, and then discussed. Meetings were held at the Welsh Chapel, Sebastopol Hill. The tone of the discussion, as reported in *The Miner and Weekly Star*, was fairly comprehensive and erudite, but the approach taken regarding the local Aboriginal people adopted a noticeably mid-Victorian 'tolerance', and was particularly patronising in its appraisal of the appearance and culture of these people. "Phrenologically, they were not so low as was generally supposed. … " Disparaging remarks were made about the lack of religion, in which the Aborigines were considered "barren … hence their degradation, having no idea of a Deity". The lecturer concluded by mentioning the attempts which had been made towards the so-called civilisation of these people, and pointed out the obstacles which still lay in the way.[53]

In 1858, the same newspaper documented what was probably the second "Grand Eisteddfod" in Ballarat: at that early stage, there was no reference to a 'great tradition' of eisteddfodau in Ballarat, in fact the chairman, Theophilus Williams, found it necessary to explain the reason for the gathering.[54] It is perhaps significant that one of the speakers, Mr. Thomas Jones of Lanberris, spoke at length at this early eisteddfod about "The characteristics of the Welsh". Even at such an early stage, the Welsh were noticeably preoccupied with themselves. Jones, after a nervous preamble (the reporter speculated

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[51] Withers, *History of Ballarat,* p. 288.
[52] *Ballarat Eisteddfod: Report of the Meetings Held in Ballarat in 1885 - 1886 with Introductory and Historical Notes; together with The Programme of the Eisteddfod to be held in 1887,* ed. Williams and Humffray, Ballarat, James Curtis, 1986, p. 3.
[53] *Miner and Weekly Star*, 27 March, 1857, p. 534.

that he was possibly a little unsure of his reception), suggested that the Welsh could be identified by several characteristics, which included:

- "the gathering in groups around a chapel or church", and an "instinct of inquisitiveness";
- "the great want of knowledge in commercial transactions" … their "non-speculation tendency";
- the outstanding literary position held by the Welsh, second only to Edinburgh, but soon to usurp even this city as the "Modern Athens" of the world;
- in respect of religion, "the Welsh alone shone peculiarly;" … "religion had been interwoven in everything by the Welsh".

The nervous speech giver did not get abused, and the Chairman merely made the pithy observation that "the audience ought to be grateful to the last speaker for telling them their faults."[55] Apart from the introspective tone of this address, the other most interesting, though tantalising, feature of this 'Grand Eisteddfod' was the item presented by the mysteriously named "Ballarat Choir", who appropriately, performed a piece of new music written by the conductor, Mr. Thomas E. Morgan, entitled "Ballarat". Tantalising, because nothing more is known of this piece, and interesting because at almost their earliest eisteddfod, the Welsh in Ballarat have addressed the two issues which were to continuously preoccupy them for the remainder of the century - the nature of Welshness, and its resolution within a burgeoning pride in Ballarat.

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[54] *Miner and Weekly Star*, 31 December, 1858, p. 426.

From the middle to late 1850s through to the 1890s, the Ballarat Welsh community was holding annual eisteddfodau and was assiduous in its organisation and support of these institutions. Ballarat newspapers document most of the eisteddfodau in fascinating detail, but they cannot all be examined in the context of this work. Historically, it is probably most valuable to look closely at a few than to list many.

The eisteddfod was a perfect vehicle for expressing Welshness, and yet it allowed other cultures to participate. The venue of the eisteddfod, by definition, was a performing one, a showcase for the celebration of Welsh culture; theoretically, it was supposed to be conducted entirely in Welsh. However, from the outset, in Ballarat, and logically, the Welsh were divided in their approach; wishing to celebrate Welshness on the one hand, and demonstrate its superiority as a culture, and on the other, attempting to relate the old culture to the new land, and make it relevant, and appropriate for the many different cultures which were flocking to Ballarat.

It was not the mere holding of these events which was important, but the implicit faith in their own cultural heritage which the organisers demonstrated in consciously creating Ballarat as a centre of Welshness in the new land. Much of the rhetoric surrounding these occasions certainly took on a widespread universal nature; so much so, that the historian is tempted to wonder whether the splendid articulations of glorious pasts and noble futures were actually statements of confidence, or whether they constituted rather the loud but genuine reinforcement needed to confirm the validity of their very presence in Ballarat. Recreation and confirmation in the new world seemed to

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[55] *Miner and Weekly Star*, 31 December, 1858, p. 426.

have been part of the point of these events; J.B. Humffray, one of Ballarat's notable Welshmen, articulated this need felt by Ballarat's Welsh to introduce themselves to Ballarat:

> We hope today's proceedings at the Eisteddfod will reward the trouble which has placed the City under such an obligation to the Welsh people who have, without a particle of narrowmindedness, introduced their interesting customs to our notice, and who have made Ballarat participate in the greatness which is, and has been, their ancient inheritance.[56]

Humffray, writing with Williams on this particular occasion, waxed lyrical

> Yet weep not, fair Cambria, though shorn of thy glory,
> Thy star shall yet rise in ascendance again;
> Song and science are treasuring the leaves of thy story,
> Not a page shall appeal to our bosoms in vain.

Humffray went on to state the case:

> Every nation has a right to show its nationality. For instance, Welshmen assert that 'Wales was Wales before England was born', and they have a right to be proud of their distinguished ancestors, whether they be called saints, warriors, patriots, orators, or bards.[57]

Certainly, it is through the agency of the eisteddfodau that the Welsh in Ballarat sought to explain the nature of their contribution to Ballarat society. Dr. William Jones, in his article[58] on "Welshness in the Victorian Goldfields in

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[56] Humffray, writing in *Ballarat Eisteddfod: Report of the Meetings held in Ballarat in 1885 - 1886, …* , 1886, p. 3.
[57] *Ballarat Eisteddfod Report …*, ed. Williams and Humffray, Ballarat, p. 10.
[58] Jones, William, " "A handful of interesting and exemplary people from a country called Wales": Welshness in the Victorian Goldfields in the Late Nineteenth Century. " Unpublished Paper delivered to '"Australian Identities": History, Culture and Environment',

the late Nineteenth Century", points out that there existed amongst at least some sections of Welsh migrants outside Wales an …

> almost obsessive compulsion … [to] discuss and define what it meant to be Welsh and how that constructed or imagined ethnic identity would adapt to, and indeed just as crucially, help to shape, the host society.[59].

A consideration of the eisteddfodau which were very notably held in Ballarat in the latter half of the nineteenth century certainly confirms this "obsessive compulsion".

In July 1891, *The Cambrian*, a Welsh-American magazine, strongly defended a criticism of Welsh eisteddfodau as "games". Games they might have been, but, responded the *Cambrian*, "intellectual ones", which were totally stimulating and all-embracing to the Welsh:

> Eisteddfod is a word which sets the Welsh heart on fire. There is no English equivalent to it. This many centuries old institution is a most unique literary and musical feature of an ancient and active union. They are the British literary Olympics and none the less so in their adopted land.[60]

A useful exercise at this juncture is to examine one such eisteddfod, and the media response, as it occurred in Ballarat in the mid-nineteenth century, with a view to understanding some of the themes which such events could encompass.

Irish Centre for Australian Studies Biennial Conference, Dublin, 3-6 July 1996 and to the Graduate School of Demography, Australian National University, Canberra, 7 January 1997.

[59] Jones, "A handful of interesting and exemplary people …", Canberra, 1997, p. 6.

[60] *The Cambrian*, X1, (July 1891), p. 209, quoted in Jones, William: *Wales in America Scranton and the Welsh, 1860 - 1920,* University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1993, pp. 156 - 157.

On 25 December 1867 the Welsh community of Ballarat filled the Theatre Royal in Ballarat with a crowd of expectant "hard headed looking men and handsome women"[61] who were intent on celebrating their Welshness via the presentation of the annual *Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol* (the National Eisteddfod).

Dr. D.J. Thomas[62] was honoured to deliver the opening address, and certainly presented the assembled guests and participants with a spirited and passionate oration:

> When I see so many of my compatriots assembled together this day, in this fine, magnificent, rich, and important town, so many thousand miles distant from our native mountains, met together for so high, noble, and I may say, for so sublime a purpose; when I see so many bards, essayists, poets, singers and harpists around me, encouraged in their noble undertaking by faces beaming with joy, and by the smiles of our fair countrywomen, it makes my heart thrill with emotion and delight.[63]

Dr. Thomas went to great pains to establish the antiquity and importance of Welsh culture, tracing its development through the "honour, glory and prosperity of the British Empire" to the new world of the Australian goldfields. In a sense, he believed that the transplantation of Welsh culture to Australia had seen the partial fulfilment of the destiny of the Welsh:

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[61] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.

[62] David John Thomas, a native of Camarthenshire, arrived in Melbourne in 1839, and was said to have been the first surgeon in Melbourne. He was an ardent Welshman, and had a distinguished career in medicine in both Europe and Victoria. He was president of the annual Ballarat Eisteddfod in 1867 - "a small man of boundless energy and good humour, partial to a good dinner and a convivial gathering, but no less afraid of controversy, a 'delightful combination of Puck, Peter Pan, Fluellen.' Died in 1871.
See *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* Vol. 2, 1788 -1850, pp. 514 - 515.

> I feel proud to belong to a people who have added, though silently and unrecognised, so much to the glory, honour, and prosperity of the British empire, and who I believe will maintain that character in Australia which has been assigned to them in Europe as an integral part of the British empire.

Dr. Thomas' carefully constructed address outlines the development of Christianity in Britain from earliest times, and identified what he believed to be the contribution of Welsh wisdom and enlightenment to such a development:

> In war, religion, intellectual pursuits and music, we have not been behind hand with the rest of mankind … The Welsh as a people are Christians, every man can read his Bible, and all the children scrupulously attend the Sunday School. Those institutions were earlier recognised, and more extensively carried out, and they took a more firm hold in Wales than in any other part of the British Empire, after their first establishment …

Dr. Thomas further observed that the value of the very 'Welsh' eisteddfod has a vital role to play in the easing of world tensions, no less; referring to the "cruelties" perpetrated by early Christians (namely Catholics and Protestants), he suggests that

> had such meetings as the one which has collected us on this day been at that time general, people's hearts would have been mutually softened, their selfish and bigoted notions would have been dispelled, and from the closer intercourse, it would be found that those holding different tenets were not so bad after all, for like themselves, they

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[63] *Address of the President, Dr. D. J. Thomas, at the Eisteddfod, held at the Theatre in Ballarat, on the 25th of December, 1867. Victorian Pamphlets*, Series No. 1, vol. 72, held in Rare Books section, La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria.

> possessed feelings of attachment, affection, sympathy and love, and such barbarities could not have occurred.[64]

He argued that to meet together in an eisteddfod requires a certain amount of education and training, and that these qualities, by definition, "tend to mental improvement and good conduct". Dr. Thomas professed great hope that the Welsh legacy of eisteddfodau would bring to "this free country, with such liberal laws and such fine educational institutions" a legacy of freedom of thought, and wider access to all-important educational resources - the right, he believed, of every man;

> we have occasion to rejoice [that] … the humbler class have the opportunity and the social right of education, which in ancient times they were debarred from.

Australia is perceived by Dr. Thomas as the land of opportunity for the "humbler classes", and the legacy of eisteddfodau, he believed, should further develop this perception, until

> "Here every man can act reverentially, in accordance with his early teachings, his feelings and his conscience, without hindrance of any kind." [65]

The Welsh legacy, then, is identified as developing a fine new brand of egalitarian liberalism within the colonies of the New World - and particularly in Gwlad yr Au (City of Gold). Thomas' address demonstrates the way in which the eisteddfodau deliberately and consciously engaged the audiences and cultures of Ballarat. He spoke clearly of the ways in which the

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[64] Dr. Thomas, *Address …,* December, 1867, pp. 4-5.
[65] Dr. Thomas, *Address …,* December, 1867, p. 4.

specifically Welsh culture could move outside its own framework to aid in the amelioration of cultural and political incompatibility, and was quite blatant in his attempts to link the importance of the Welsh civilisation with the bestowal of enlightenment which it brought to Ballarat society. In this situation, cultural commingling was a desired result; what the eventual outcome might be for the survival of Welsh culture abroad is another story.

In his address, Dr. Thomas referred to a particular debate about the value of eisteddfodau which appeared to have been taking place at about the same time as the Ballarat Eisteddfod occurred in 1867. The controversy centred around articles written by correspondents in *The Times* and the *Saturday Review* querying the worth and importance of eisteddfodau in general. Thomas, too, was unimpressed by the nature of the English press attack on the institution of the Eisteddfod, regretting that the *Times*, the *Saturday Review*, and Mr. Yates (a judge at the Camarthen Eisteddfod) "should have thought proper to write so disparagingly about the Eisteddfodau." Dr. Thomas was conciliatory, but felt obliged to point out - as the *Imperial Review* reporter did - that the humble and working class origins of most of the participants in the eisteddfodau had an intrinsic value which should not be underestimated, nor undervalued in terms of the contribution which it could make to the new society in which it found itself:

> Had the writers considered that those who take part in the Eisteddfodau, are principally the sons and daughters of toil, to whom the dignity of labour is a pride, who have not had the advantage of college learning or of in any way acquiring the principles of the higher education, they would have been more considerate in their remarks. In what part of the British Empire, or of the Continent, will you find so large a majority of the people, who like the Welsh, toil during the day, and occupy the evening with music and singing, and although

> untaught, except among themselves, they bring forth not only the lays of their own country, but modern operatic compositions?[66]

Dr. Thomas continued to emphasise the modest scenario against which the eisteddfodau were enacted:

> Where can choir singing be more honestly and with more precision sung than by the self-taught Welsh, and this without accompaniment of any kind. Throw down the gauntlet, to see whether it will be taken up by an equal number of amateurs like yourselves, from amongst any of the nations of which this community is formed?[67]

The real value of the eisteddfodau, and the nature of their existence, was that they represented certain valuable qualities which might be transported to the new society.

> I do not for a moment say that our countrymen are better than others, but I do say that they have customs which, if introduced in this part of the world, would be attended with most happy results.[68]

The *Ballarat Star* reporter (a somewhat sceptical Englishman) who reported on the 1867 Eisteddfod was also, it seems, somewhat derisive about the gathering in the Theatre Royal in Ballarat; he certainly appeared to have been aware of the debate involving *The Times* and the Camarthen Eisteddfod judging. After the style of the *Times* account, the Ballarat reporter adopted from the outset a rather condescending manner, and took great pains to make clear to his readers just what exactly 'went on' in such an un-English event:

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[66] Dr. Thomas, *Address …*, December, 1867, pp. 6-7.
[67] Dr. Thomas, *Address …*, December, 1867, p. 7.
[68] Dr. Thomas, *Address …*, December, 1867, p. 7.

> For those who … however may not happen to know what it means, we may say it signifies a bardic gathering where poetry, music, and essays are sung or recited, judgement passed thereon and prizes awarded.[69]

The reporter clearly felt a little out of his depth in reporting the occasion, and there is a supercilious note in his attitude to the event:

> It is hardly necessary to say that a Welsh celebration is a little out of the way of newspaper reporting in an English speaking community …

He was therefore aided in his interpretation of the event by the secretary of the Eisteddfod, Mr. Williams of Smeaton; as well, Mr. Theophilus Williams "assisted also very courteously in coaching our plebian Sassenach ears in the doings of the gathering." The reporter, however, reserved the right to "look to them for routine details" but wanted to "go and see and listen" on his own account. Perhaps the fact of having to cover the Eisteddfod on Christmas Day might account for the somewhat jaded tone of the first few paragraphs of the report.

Whilst still retaining a degree of cynicism, the *Star* reporter becomes increasingly seduced by the antiquity and elitism of the material presented in the Theatre Royal that afternoon. Unable to understand a good deal of what is actually happening - most of it was spoken in Welsh - the reporter nevertheless began to develop some glimmer of understanding of the importance of such gatherings to the Welsh, and also began to divine a little of the depth of the great cultural heritage which is prefigured by those who perform at the eisteddfod.

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[69] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.

Alluding to the perceived high handedness of one of the Camarthen judges, the *Star* reporter reflected thus:

> What was Mr. Yates or the pyramids to the glorious tongue of ancient Prydain? Napoleon 'hifalutin' to his troops, in Egypt, about forty centuries looking down upon them from the pyramids only alluded to mere green juvenilities compared with the hoar antiquity of Cymry, whose language, if we read "Britannia Antiquissima" reverently, and other Welsh authorities, is the mother of Greek, and dates immeasurably beyond the advent of Sanscrit, or the hurly-burly of Babel. These are the thoughts that from year to year kindle the national heart of Wales, and cause it to recur to the historic glories of its bards, who flourished when the world was young.[70]

Of what merit, asked the reporter, are the values and heritage of English culture?

> We vulgar moderns may smile at such things, but where are our Eisteddfods?

English customs, observed our English friend, are prosaic and even materialistic when compared with the nobility and depth of Welsh culture:

> We eat our geese and cackle over our plum-pudding, while these heirs of all the Druids talk poetry and prose, sing music, win prizes, and gibe at our obstinate English critic in London. These are indubitably the patrons of literature and music.[71]

Neither England, Scotland nor Ireland could possibly match this birthright; in fact, these countries have 'sold out' to the demands of the 'modern' age:

> Not John Bull, nor his brother of the Land o' Cakes, nor his other brother of the greenest Emerald can rise to these altitudes, for even the Celt of the Island of Saints has lost his old renown, declines upon grosser things than Eisteddfods, and expends his enthusiasm upon tenant right, Fenianism, and potatoes.[72]

It is only the Welshmen, noted the *Star* reporter, who can claim to glorify their heritage:

> The Welshman then, who adheres to his Eisteddfod, has a right boldly to beard his fellow-subjects in the gate and look as lofty as old Snowden, and as poetic as the soft vales and picturesque highlands of the principality.
>
> The Welsh, in fact, utilise the Eisteddfod to perpetuate and exalt their national heritage, whilst the rest of the plebeian population of Ballarat are satisfied and preoccupied with self-indulgent trivia. … He may wrap himself round in the glory of each year's Eisteddfod, and feel that while other people are giving to material things a festive attention, he is perpetuating a national love of music and poetry, and keeping alive and bright all the thrilling memories which encircle his country and language with a charm unknown to those outside the ancient family of the Cymry.

The *Star* account developed a sarcastic edge as the reporter continued to witness the ongoing proceedings of the Eisteddfod. Perhaps the writer felt a little uncomfortable and envious in the presence of such intellectual depth and ancient culture. Whatever the reason, it is impossible to avoid noting the slightly acerbic tone which is adopted to describe the 'antiquity' on which the occasion draws; clearly, the reporter is not so much awed by the process as somewhat sceptical about its significance. With tongue firmly in cheek, he described "Norma" bending her "beautiful brow" "in seemliest reverence"

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[70] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.
[71] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.
[72] *Ballarat Star*, 27 December, 1867.

before the President ("the very latest of the Druids"), whilst singing her "Casta Diva" with touching grace and pathos. The "Scribes" or judges are undoubtedly inspired from "the times beyond the Deluge", and indeed, it seems that our reporter would not be surprised to find that they "drink from a fountain that had become antique when the springs of Castaly were yet undiscovered." The performers, too, hailed from ancient times …. "Eve might have heard the same music as the harper discourses", whilst Mr. Lloyd "represents the ancestor of degenerate Apollo, whose music was only Grecian." Even the prizes - ribbons and silk moneybags that were hung "gently" on the necks of the prize poets, singers and essayists - derived from none other than Mt Olympus, which "borrowed its idea of laurel crowns for its Hellenic worshippers in the modern times of 2000 or 3000 years ago."

The intrinsically serious nature of the eisteddfod assumed almost pantomime proportions when a gentleman was observed "ecstatically mounting a chair" and reading from a poem or an essay - and this, too, was

> but the echo of sounds that were heard when the hard nuts of geology were in the process of induration for the puzzling of modern theologists and savans [sic: probably *savants*].[73]

"Everything", the awed correspondent concluded, hailed from the deep past:

> … all sights and sounds are glinting with the grey light or, suffused with the mellow melody of the primeval.

The humble and worldly folk of Ballarat could not hope to compete:

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[73] *Ballarat Star*, 27 December, 1867.

> As we look and listen we cease to be of this world of Christmas and picnics and plum pudding, and become etherialised (sic) into Welshmen doing an Eisteddfod. [74]

The bard's address (in English) on the second day of the 1867 Eisteddfod in a sense underlined the general feeling of conciliation which spelled the failure of the prolongation of Welsh culture in Ballarat. Mr. Evans of Wangaratta, gloriously identified for the Eisteddfod participants as "Daniel ddu o Fon" or, better still, Black Daniel of Anglesea, spoke of the need to welcome ALL participants to the eisteddfod, even the once unacceptable Saxons, and suggested that all the British races should combine together in the new state of Victoria, and let bygones be bygones. Past enmities should be forgotten in the new empire " 'neath these southern skies", and national differences should be absolved into one glorious, melded "Briton".

> Welcome, thrice welcome, on this happy day;
> Even to the Saxon let's good-will display.
> Say, friends, because our fathers fought, shall we
> Despise the fruits of peaceful rivalry?
> No, says the Past, and firmly No say you;
> A thousand noes re-echo Future, too.
> No! all who kindly are assembled here
> As friends upon the welcome scene appear,
> As friends - yes friends - that noble word shall be
> The motto and the glory of the free!
> Our native land, so dear, we left behind;
> Our race may differ, but we are one in mind.
> The English, Irish, Welsh, and Scotch combined
> Make up the Briton - monarch of mankind!
> And Britain's glory will our hearts inspire,
> And in Victoria kindle up the fire
> That animated many a noble band
> To add fresh glories to our Fatherland.
> Far in the future Britain's sons shall rise,

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[74] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.

Empire on empire 'neath these southern skies.
Our ships, exchanging produce, swift shall glide
On every ocean - in every harbour ride.
The Briton's everywhere: fast railways are
Mark of his footsteps in the distant far.
With fruitful vine these forests shall abound,
With golden grain above, and gold beneath the ground;
While freedom, peace, and happiness abound.[75]

Such a statement is enormously important; although passed without comment on the day, it clearly described the 'philosophy' to which the Welsh in Ballarat had begun to subscribe. The very essence of Welshness was being compromised by the admission to "the fruits of peaceful rivalry".

"English, Irish, Welsh and Scotch combined" are welcomed to the new brotherhood of race which is being formed " 'neath these southern skies", all differences are forgotten, and all rivalries resolved in the greater glory of being part of Britain … "monarch of all mankind". But in the magnanimity of "Britain's glory", the particularity of being Welsh (or Cornish, or English, or Irish, or Scotch) was dissolved and lost.

What Black Daniel - and, presumably, his audience - failed to see clearly was that, as with the homeland itself, the assimilation of the Welsh language and culture into the other national groups which composed Ballarat society in the latter half of the nineteenth century, whilst it might have appeared a glorious outcome, and one desirable for society as a whole, in fact implied the loss of a strong and sure, individual and distinct Welsh culture. By announcing their willingness to take on other cultures, the Welsh in Ballarat put the larger view - and possibly the greater good (as they perceived it) - of the society ahead of

[75] *Ballarat Star,* 27 December, 1867.

the survival of their own unique singularity as a people. From the minute that they admitted the possibility of a comfortable existence with other national groups, their own culturally independent existence was compromised.

Eisteddfodau in Ballarat continued throughout the century, with varying degrees of success; in 1877, for example, the "Welsh Swagman" reported on one of his many trips to the eisteddfodau in Ballarat. He was a resilient and observant participator, albeit a somewhat crusty diarist. His entry for January 1877 is fairly disparaging about the way in which the competitions had changed:

> The eisteddfod at Ballarat on next St. David's Day is to be more of a concert where singing takes the place of composition. I do not consider that singing alone is of any advantage to keep up the language of the Ancient Britons. I cannot imagine what the patrons of the "Eisteddfod Pawr Caerfyrddin" would say to parading this concert as an eisteddfod. At the Camarthen eisteddfod there were present Iolo Morganwg, Ifan Tegid, Danied Ddu, as well as the renowned bards of Wales and England.[76]

Josiah Hughes, writing in 1890, is a little kinder in his observations, noting the changes in Ballarat in general in the thirty years since he was last there:

> All this reflects great credit upon the authorities and the population of this prosperous city, the site of which only thirty-five years ago was occupied by reckless and law-defying gold hunters, whose successors we now see developed into law-abiding, educated, refined and progressive people, possessing one of the finest cities in the southern

[76] *Diary of a Welsh Swagman 1869 - 1894*, abridged and notated by William Evans, Sun Books, Melbourne, 1975, p. 65.

> hemisphere, of its size, considering that its population is only a little over 42,000.[77]

Hughes commented shrewdly on the standard of the 1890 Eisteddfod, held after Christmas that year; he attended out of interest, to "learn of the progress" of his countrymen. Hughes was quite impressed with the opening speech of the President, Mr. D.M. Davies, local Buninyong resident, MP, and Minister for Public Works, and, indeed, Davies' speech, as reported by Hughes, certainly presented some important observations regarding the role and position of the "old nationalities of Britain". Davies articulated the realisation of that 'destiny' which was prefigured in earlier eisteddfods where the comfortable existence " 'neath southern skies" of all the British races would ultimately occur. In 1890, according to Davies, this has, in fact, happened:

> That the Welsh, as a nation, shall die is inevitable: there is nothing exceptional or terrible in this to a nation any more than to an individual; every man who comes into the world is but a unit in the infinitude of numbers, and a nation is only a drop as compared with the sea of human beings that have and will exist on this earth. The life of the longest-lived period is too small a space of time to be compared with the continuation of intelligent existence on this globe. It is our selfishness that has over magnified our importance.

Davies "went on to show how largely the British nationality and all its greatness is indebted to the original races of the islands" and claimed that

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[77] Hughes, Josiah, *Australia Revisited in 1890, and Excursions in Egypt, Tasmania, and New Zealand being extracts from the Diary of a Trip round the World, including Original Observations on Colonial Subjects and Statistical Information on the Pastoral, Agricultural, Horticultural, and Mining Industries of the Colonies*, London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, and Company, Stationers' Hall, Court. , 1891, p. 151.

> If you will take away all that is due to the Scotchman, the Irishman, and the Welshman, from the army and navy of England, and from her field of literature, the pure Englishman, if he can be found, is welcome to all the honour and glory that is left.[78]

Hughes' opinion of the standard of the Eisteddfod dropped considerably on the second day. The day was a 'scorcher', only six people had turned up by the starting time of 9.30 (and these were believed by Hughes to be officials), and the rest of the paltry crowd "dribbled in all stages of fatigue and perspiration until 10.15." Hughes was unimpressed. He was even more unimpressed by the standard set by the 'factotum' of the Eisteddfod, David Hughes, "a retired blacksmith and mining speculator, who wore the appearance of a vulgar, undeveloped working man, too rudely torn from his original associations".[79] Hughes was insulted by the remarks made by Chairman David Hughes regarding the educational standards in Wales: our commentator, in fact, demonstrated a distinctly condescending tone in comparing the two addresses: he embraced the sentiments expressed in the first day's speech, and was snobbishly intolerant of those of the second day:

> The speech of Mr. David Hughes was in great contrast to that of Mr. D.M. Davies, on the previous day; but I have thought to give the two extremes of what are apt to be expected in a community such as the Welsh population of Australia.[80]

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[78] Hughes, *Australia Revisited …*, London, 1891, pp. 153-154.
[79] Joseph Hughes was, in fact, mistaken about David Hughes' origins: Kimberly's *Ballarat and Vicinity* identifies him as a retired, successful baker, and speaks highly of him as a good citizen of Ballarat: "His energy in the face of difficulties, his administrative abilities, and wide experience would have enabled him to rise to the highest position in any municipality, and in social life his many hearty and generous qualities win him much regard and respect." Kimberly, W. B.: *Ballarat and Vicinity*, Niven and Co., Ballarat, 1894, p. 176.
[80] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, p.155.

Hughes' reaction is most interesting: the tone of his report, and his espousing of the sentiments of Davies, would seem to indicate that he supported and understood the idea of the diminution of the Welsh culture in Australia, but in fact, he was very scathing of the more low-brow presentation which such a diminution portends. The "Australianisation" of this Eisteddfod was more than this visiting Welshman could stand.

> The programme of the meeting was gone through in a very primitive, sociable, free-and-easy manner, more like a caricature than a real, actual, sober Eisteddfod. The jokes of the conductor were pointless and dull, and the adjudications, recitations, and competitions were wearisome to a degree; but to speak fairly, how could it be otherwise with such ordinary materials, and the thermometer at 98 in the shade?[81]

The proceedings of the whole Eisteddfod, Mr Hughes realised with absolute horror, "were conducted by comparatively illiterate working men." With some exceptions, Hughes thought that the whole thing appeared as if it was a child's play performed by grown-up people:

> It was innocent recreation enough so long as they pleased themselves and an audience of their own calibre. It was also a very amusing and interesting phenomenon as a relic of primitive culture to on-lookers from a more elevated platform.[82]

It would seem that Hughes believed that Ballarat had moved on, and that the cult of the eisteddfod as it was performed in Ballarat was no longer relevant, but a mere 'relic' of a quaint and uncivilised past. Those responsible for this low standard - these working class 'illiterates' - clearly did not have a place in Hughes' scheme of a culturally advanced 'elevated' Ballarat. Hughes' final

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[81] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, pp. 155-156.

summing up of the worth of the eisteddfod as an instrument of culture was that the literary competitions maintained the interest of the Welsh-born, whilst the musical competitions encourage the colonial children to study and practise music. Hughes completed his very condescending summing up by remarking in a patronising tone that he found the children of parents of "very humble origin" very well brought up, and more than capable of holding their own with the same classes of other nationalities.[83]

Hughes' comments are important not only for the perceptions they give us on a particular eisteddfod (1890), but because of the insights which they give us into the place which such occurrences have in the rest of the (Ballarat) community life. By 1890, Hughes, as a visiting Welshman, is able to stand back and judge eisteddfodau as a mere incident in the larger life of the city:

> Of course, the Eisteddfod was not the only source of entertainment and recreation on these Christmas holidays …[84]

He enumerates the many other activities - cricket, bicycling, travelling on lake steamers, picnic parties, visits to the lake and the public gardens - and it is clear that the Welsh community was competing with what has become a recognisably 'Australian' holiday scenario. Things have changed in Ballarat: the staples of community recreation are no longer solely dictated by the traditions of a far away cultural imperative. Even as the eisteddfodau were seemingly at their height, in the 1880s, a letter to the Editor[85] in the *Star* suggested that the attendance and quality of the upcoming Eisteddfod might

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[82] Hughes, *Australia Revisited,* p. 156.
[83] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, p. 157.
[84] Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, London, 1891, p. 156.
[85] *Star*, 20 January 1880, p. 2. (Mab Y Wedow, author of the letter, was not successful in her application.)

not be so high or 'grand' as it should be; the letter expressed anxiety that laxity of the competitors might lead to a falling off of standards:

> Also, it is highly desirable that choirs should meet to rehearse if they consider our reputation as singers is worthy of being sustained in a new country.

So concerned was the Eisteddfod Committee that they requested the Commissioner of Railways (no less) to allow excursion trains to run on the day of the event. It was noted, very pointedly, that members of the St. Patrick's Society were permitted such a privilege on St. Patrick's Day.

Figure 15 Humffray

The eisteddfodau of the sixties and seventies in Ballarat were by far the most successful and completely Welsh of all in that half century, yet by 1886, J.B. Humffray would write of the efforts of the Ballarat Eisteddfod Committee to "carry out in spirit, though unable to do so in form" the essence of the 'ancient' eisteddfod; Humffray admitted the impossibility of remaining foolishly apart from membership of the Empire, acknowledging that

> While we preserve our nationality, and foster the customs and institutions bequeathed to us by our forefathers, it would be idle and foolish to forget that we are an integral portion of the great British nation, whose flag waves on every sea, in every clime, and whose language and peoples form a belt around the earth. [86]

The bigger picture, the greater truth, was now being seen as desirable, but the cost was significant.

At the end of the day, the 1886 Eisteddfod address, given by Mr. D.H. Evans, gave up all pretence of individual Welshness. He acknowledged the debt which the "modern Briton" owed to the heritage of "the ancient Briton", but continues in ameliorating tone, thus:

> We are not angry with the English. We envy them not. They justly hold the sceptre.

Evans points out that the whole world aspires to be as successful as the British race, and the Welsh are no exception to this rule. However, he argues, "the glory of the nation is that of the principality." Despite the greatness of the individual races, the total is greater than the sum of the parts. Waterloo, he pointed out, was won by "that noble compound, the Briton, and

> The English, Irish, Welsh, and Scotch combined,
> Make up the Briton, monarch of all mankind.

And yet, despite all the attacks on the Welsh nation by wicked villains from the past, Evans claimed that the Welsh had remained intact; amazingly:

> Notwithstanding that we were conquered by the Romans, driven afterwards to the mountains by the Saxons, and hunted by the Normans, who even strove to abolish our language, yet our name hath not been blotted out from under heaven. Our language is as pure and attractive as it was when it used to win a maiden's love or inspire a warrior in battle thousands of years ago.

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[86] Williams, and Humffray, *Ballarat Eisteddfod, Report of the Meetings held in Ballarat, 1885 - 1886,* Pamphlet, Government Printer, 1886, Melbourne; La Trobe Library, Rare Books, Melbourne, p. 6.

Evans was triumphant. He proclaimed a victory, but seemed to have lost sight of the point of the battle.

> Happy Wales, happy Welshmen of Ballarat, we are proud that we form a prosperous portion of a mighty nation!
> 'We need not mourn departed days,
> Lost Empire, glory fled,
> If long have ceased our ancient kings,
> Our kingdom is not dead.'
> Dead! No!
> The Briton will live --------
> 'Hyd enyd marwnad anian
> Aboed onid el y byd dan.'[87]

The emergence and transformation of the eisteddfod was almost certainly the most significant milestone in the Welsh progression along the path towards 'becoming Australians'. This most Welsh of all institutions was used by the resident Welsh population of Ballarat throughout the second half of the nineteenth century to (as they believed) further the cause of Welsh culture, and proclaim the consequence of this culture to the fledgling goldfields community. How much importance the Welsh themselves attached to the regular holding of these events is beyond doubt. Time and again speakers at the opening events confirmed their faith in the value of such gatherings: newspaper reports confirmed good attendances, and every reason for 'being there' was put forward. From just having a good time … "little vanities and the simple delights of the annual gathering of friends and compatriots…."[88] to the grandiloquent expression of the importance of Welsh culture to the colony - the eisteddfod could represent it all.

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[87] Williams and Humffray (eds.), *Ballarat Eisteddfod: Report … 1885 - 1886*, pp. 19 - 20.
[88] *Ballarat Star*, 3 March, 1880.

> The Muse had a wonderful effect upon our own countrymen in the days old. She inspired the ancient Britons with that indomitable courage and love of country which made them formidable opponents to the Romans. Yes, she caused the Roman eagle to cower before her Heaven-born face and to take its flight across the Alps back to Italy.' [Talhaiarn, Welsh poet] She nerved the strong arm of the warrior in the battle and she hallowed hospitality in peace. The object of the Ballarat Eisteddfod is to encourage and promote the cultivation of popular music, that kind of music that vibrates through the heart and raises man in the scale of being that makes him think better of the creation and the Creator. The Ballarat Eisteddfod has attained this proud position of being ancillary to, or the social handmaid of, all the primary music school in the colony, and was the first competitive musical festival held on Ballarat, and open to all nationalities.…[89]

Dr. Thomas spoke here of the proud traditions of the Welsh, and their eagerness to perpetuate these traditions in Ballarat. To this end, the Ballarat eisteddfod was revived and carried on, but in Ballarat it was "open to all nationalities". The mythic greatness of these cultural roots was, according to Dr. Thomas, legion:

> Much of our lore has been handed down from mouth to mouth through successive generations, and the earliest history of Britain is recorded by the poetry of the race, and to a very small extent by manuscripts; and it is our pride that we have at all times cultivated the arts, sciences, and literature, and our present gathering (Eisteddfod) is in accordance with our ancient customs, peaceful in its nature, elevating in its tone, binding in its tendency, and divine in its inspiration.[90]

And the people of Ballarat were therefore under an obligation to express their gratitude for this great benefaction which the people of Wales had brought them. The *Star* continued, even in 1885, to express, somewhat pompously, the importance of the Eisteddfod heritage for Ballarat…

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[89] *Ballarat Eisteddfod: Report ... 1885 - 1886*, p. 12, [reprinted from the *Star*].

> the benefit of such galleries can scarcely be over-estimated, the immediate effects being the encouragement of musical and elocutionary culture. That such must exercise a beneficial effect upon the rising generation is obvious, and our Welsh fellow-colonists are to be congratulated on the good they are effecting in this way in the community.[91]

This, it might be suggested, confirms the success in Ballarat of Welsh myth-making. Georgina Binns' thesis has already charted the rise of the Royal South Street Society Eisteddfod; her work pursues this development into the twentieth century. The genesis of this legacy, however, can be directly attributed to the creation of an environment of self-improvement and pursuit of the arts which was the stated agenda of the earlier eisteddfodau of the Welsh community in nineteenth century Ballarat:

> They set an example to the colony of cosmopolitan liberality in fostering the development of native talent, …. which has been happily imitated by many kindred societies in this and other colonies of Australasia.[92]

A study of the rise and establishment of the South Street ethos[93] identifies the gradual emergence of an environment where 'mutual improvement' was the predominant item on the agenda. South Street, in effect, took on the mantle which the Welsh eisteddfods had created; the Welsh, with their preoccupation with matters cultural, had constructed an intellectual climate in which it was not only acceptable but desirable to emphasise this aspect of society. It also

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[90] *Address of the President, Dr. D.J. Thomas, At the Eisteddfod, Ballarat, 25 December, 1867,* p. 8.
[91] Williams and Humffray, *Ballarat Eisteddfod : Report of Proceedings … 1885-1886,* p. 16.
[92] Williams and Humffray, *Ballarat Eisteddfod: Report of Proceedings … 1885-1886,* p. 4.
[93] Binns, Georgina, "Musical Aspects of Eisteddfods and the Royal South Street Society Competitions in Ballarat to 1900", Thesis, Melbourne University, 1982.

had the added bonus of raising the profile of Ballarat still further, by causing it to be the perceived 'colonial leader' in such things:

> The success of these competitions is really remarkable. It would seem as if Ballarat was the only city in the colonies where such competitions could live and flourish with such continually increasing success.[94]

This was significant when viewed against the rich and varied tapestry of Ballarat cultural life in the latter part of the century, and particularly in light of the growth of the somewhat parochial Ballarat - Melbourne rivalry which began with "Golden City"[95], and ended with the failed Ballarat attempt to become the national capital after Federation.

By the end of the century, the Welsh in Ballarat had undergone an intellectual transformation, the outcome of which altered forever the nature of their presence on Ballarat. Those first and even second generation residents who were more Welshmen than they were 'of Ballarat' had, by the latter part of the century, been replaced by solid citizens of the Golden City whose first loyalty was to Ballarat, and whose recreated images of 'home' were more lip-service than deeply felt. As 'absence makes the heart grow fonder', so it also dims the perception of reality: Wales was a dear remembrance, rather than a vivid recollection:

> The Eisteddfod in Australia is a partial transplanting at the antipodes of the customs that for more than a thousand years have flourished amidst the picturesque hills and valleys of old Wales … and the sounds and sights at the Eisteddfod seem to give us another echo from

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[94] *Ballarat Courier*, 8 September 1898, letter from George Peake, musical adjudicator at South Street.

[95] See especially Chapter 14 of Weston Bate's *Lucky City*, p. 220 ff for a vivid analysis of Ballarat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

> those far-off ages … But the echo is a different one … That which fell upon our ears at the Eisteddfod on St. David's Day comes to us from the open hill-sides and the valleys under the hills and the clear rippling streams, where the sun shines and homes gleam in the full beams of that other light … of two thousand years ago…
>
> The faith and service have changed, old ideas and customs have vanished, as have the forests in which they found their visible and audible expression, and the people have much changed with the manifold mutations of two thousand years, but there remain the love of country, the traditions of race, the pride of cherished memories and of ancient language, and the genius of music and poetry and association.[96]

Failing interest? A cultural compromise? The demise of the eisteddfod by the end of the century is significant, but it was not, in fact, the end of the story. An alternative emerged, and Ballarat - not merely the Welsh - embraced the widely known Royal South Street competitions[97] with such alacrity that they can claim today to be one of the largest eisteddfodau in the Southern Hemisphere.

Much of the rhetoric surrounding the presence of the Welsh in Ballarat seems to have consisted of the Welsh themselves obeying the necessity to establish a logic on which they could base their understanding of themselves as strangers in a new world. Welsh community leaders such as Robert Lewis and Theophilus Williams appeared to be trying to give the Welsh community a belief in themselves, and in the value of all things Welsh, which might be successfully and usefully transplanted to the new world. Despite the

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[96] *Ballarat Star,* 3 March 1880, Editorial.

[97] On 27 January, 1891, a motion was carried at a Members and Committee Meeting of the South Street Debating Society "that in conjunction with the Twelfth Anniversary Annual Demonstration of the Society, be held a competition in music, poetry, Elocution, Essay and Debating." [South Street Society Minute Book, 1890-1893]. This was the beginning of the famous Royal South Street Society Eisteddfod, still presented annually over one hundred

(comparatively) low population percentage of Welsh on Ballarat, there seemed to have been a disproportionate concern with self-examination, and with analysis of national characteristics, and the maintenance of a national heritage. Insofar as the historian is able to apply any form of measurement to such situations, it would appear that the Welsh used significant national celebrations to puzzle over the nature of 'Welshness', glorify in its many undoubted attributes, and confirm its value for new societies. Such introspection did not occur in any of the other Celtic groups to anything like the same degree.

The Welsh self-image was the particular subject for discussion at the St. David's Day banquet in 1868. The addresses given at this event are especially interesting, highlighting as they do the importance which the homeland still held for its native Welshmen, and, further, demonstrating the ways in which the Welsh on Ballarat felt that they could reconcile patriotism and love of country of origin, with commitment to the land of their adoption. It seems that one of the expressed functions of the banquet was to organise a St. David's Society amongst the ex-patriates: Ballarat's Welshmen felt that they had somehow failed their patriotic duty when Prince Alfred (the Duke of Edinburgh) had visited Ballarat in December, 1867. In itself, this was a huge event[98], with all Ballarat's representative nationalities taking part in the enormous celebrations which ensued. But where the Chinese, Germans, the Horticultural Society, the cricket club, the Scottish, and even the children of Ballarat had gone to often extraordinary lengths to welcome the Prince, the Welsh contribution (it believed) had been unremarkable - a mere visit to Sebastopol, with a trip by the Royal visitor down the Prince of Wales mine.

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years later. (See Binns, p 19). Royal South Street was a direct descendant of the cultural legacy of the Welsh eisteddfodau.

On reflection, this omission was deeply felt by the Welsh community, and decisive action was called for:

> I need not tell you of the necessity of such an organisation [St. David's Society] as this. The very fact that we, on account of not having any organisation of the kind, let the opportunity pass without presenting our Royal visitor, Prince Alfred, with an address from us as a people, shows the necessity for an organisation of this kind. Though we may never have the like opportunity again, we shall often have opportunities to show our loyalty, but shall not be able to do so, if we be content with being a scattered and not a united people.[99]

This was clearly a matter of some concern for those at the banquet, and generated in the course of the evening a whole range of insights and reflections about the nature of Welshness, and the importance of being thus in a new society. The speech (by the Rev. D.M. Davies of Sebastopol) was spent glorifying his native Wales, and pointing out the intellectual strengths of the country. He felt that the Welsh emigrant population of Ballarat gave great cause for pride, with wealth, talent and influence abounding, and called for racial unity, and for the utilisation of that talent and perseverance so that others less fortunate may be inspired to great works. The Rev. Davis urged greatness - in achievement and in mind - and enthusiastically claimed greatness of spirit and humility if such ideals were achieved.

Robert Lewis, chairman, then proposed the toast …"Our Native Land" and took up the address, firing up his hearers with vigorous evocations of Wales and her rich history, which, according to Lewis, had never burned with a

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[98] See Bate, *Lucky City,* pp. 157 - 164 for a vivid account of the way in which the visit took Ballarat by storm.
[99] *Star,* 4 March 1868, p. 4.

brighter flame - absence, (and distance) in this case, indeed making the heart grow fonder:

> However far he may be from the land of his fathers, his thoughts are easily turned thither again. When he hears the ancient melodies of his country he is reminded of the struggles of his ancestors in the cause of liberty on Rhuddlan Marsh or among the hills of Harlech. The glowing poetry of Wales vividly portrays the wild hills, the winding rivers, the wooded dales; the pleasant vales he remembers so well. [Cheers][100]

Striking a deeply felt chord, Lewis avows that wherever in the world a Welshman lives, he is in exile: longing for "the land of the mountain and the flood, the land of song and melody." Fond remembrance, rather than actual fact, is surely at play here: the truth of the matter is that most Welsh emigrants to Australia came from the industrial south, rather than the "land of the mountain and the flood". Wild hills, wooded dales, and winding rivers were more the province of northern Wales. The grim fact is that the industrial south was very far from the sylvan glades and sparkling streams of the exiled imagination. As with the Cornish, reality fell far short of the romanticised ideal, and both the Welsh and the Cornish had left their beloved homelands in order to improve their lot in life. In the case of the Cornish, migration was often the only option available if they were to avoid outright poverty, and mass exodus was the result; in the case of the Welsh, departure from home was generally the result of a logical decision to better themselves and their lives, and that of future generations.

Pragmatic patriotism played an important role in the inspired passions of this St. David's Day banquet. It was a combination of deeply felt patriotism,

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[100] *Star,* 4 March 1868, p. 4.

combined with a judicious comprehension of their own best qualities, which, according to Lewis, would allow the present generation to succeed in their new country. Lewis spoke with pride of the noble roots of Welsh patriotism, and attributed its lasting strength to the perceived strength of the land they left behind them. It is important to understand that this image, too, is a popular rather than an accurate one. Wales was not only the land of wild woods and rushing rivers, but a land of solid development and enormous potential, glorying in a morally upright and well-educated population. Lewis argued that had this not been the case, Welsh patriotism in Ballarat would not have had such a firm basis, and would not be such a strong and potentially important force.

> If we had left behind us a poverty-stricken, superstitious peasantry; if the resources of the country were left undeveloped, its lands ill-tilled, its industries decaying; if the people were immoral, steeped in ignorance and degradation; if such had been the case, what would our patriotism have degenerated to?[101]

The outcome, predicted Lewis, would have been a total loss of standing for Wales - anarchy, sedition, and outrage, with Wales plunging into international disrepute. The consequences would have been dire: however, Lewis was relieved to be able to inform his hearers that such had not been the case. On the contrary, Wales was noted for its "frugality, absence of crime, and especially the deep religious feeling pervading high and low", and this, in spite of a perceived touch of disdain and amusement by other nations at the idea of "our Druidical lore and our bardic contests". The Welsh, with full confidence in the strength of their heritage, could afford to ignore this ridicule, believing that the rest of the world had no understanding of such

deep matters; the most important qualities - "the solid virtues of a free, industrious people" - were universally recognised and respected.

Lewis' pragmatism extended further: he was not content to rest wholly on the fine reputation of the ancient and upright Welsh heritage, but urged his listeners to consider the other, less attractive side of the picture …

> While commemorating the virtues of our countrymen, let us not shut our eyes to their defects. *The chief failing of Wales is defective education.* [my emphasis].

Weston Bate suggests that this statement might point to a recognition of general Welsh illiteracy on the goldfields[102]. This is a strange assessment, given the nature of the overall Welsh perception of themselves as an 'educated elite'. The work of Peter Griffiths, Kerry Cardell and Cliff Cumming on the Welsh in Victoria is beginning to suggest the same situation: I would argue that it is a matter of fact versus perception.

Welsh community leaders on Ballarat wished to paint a picture of the cultured, industrious Welshman, innocent of heart, guileless, and almost rustic in outlook. They seemed to draw a definite distinction between the sort of education implied in the erudition and wisdom of ancient cultures, and the kind of education which Lewis believed the Welsh at home and abroad still required - that of practical knowledge.

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[101] *Star,* 4 March 1868, p 4.
[102] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 285, and Footnote 4.

> It is a laudable thing to be at home in Zion and Carmel, in Jordan and Kedron, but it is deplorable to know nothing of the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Thames, and the Mississipi.

At the conclusion of the speech, Chairman Lewis rejected the niggling concerns raised earlier in the speech, and chose to rally the Welsh community with a call to patriotism - an easier option, perhaps, than addressing a real issue. He urged his fellow Welshmen to cherish their nationality, but qualified this spontaneous patriotism with a request that such patriotism be utilised. 'Be proud, yet practical', was the message.

> Don't let us be always keeping our eyes sentimentally turned to the past, but let us keep our faces steadily turned to the future before us. Think of our fathers' struggles for freedom; think of their taste for culture; the taste that kept learning alive in those dark ages. Think of these things and ponder them, but don't be satisfied with admitting our ancestors' feats, and singing their glory. …Fill up the deficiencies of the old land in the new; be true to God, your country, and yourselves, and you will be worthy descendants of the heroes who fought, and the bards who sang in the dear old land you left behind you. [Cheers][103]

It seemed entirely appropriate that at the conclusion of these ringing sentiments, Mr. John Jones sang *Hen wlad fy Nhadau* (Land of our Fathers).[104]

A Chapel Culture

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[103] *Star*, 4 March 1868, p. 4.
[104] *Star,* 4 March, 1868, p. 4.

It is argued by Arthur Hughes that the most important reason for the cohesiveness and cultural commitment of the Welsh in nineteenth century Australia was the fact of the maintenance of the Welsh language. This was the language of the chapels, and the source, in Wales, of an educated, literate laity led by well-informed and dynamic priests. Certainly, the Welsh in Ballarat in the first two or three decades maintained their chapel culture assiduously, and many of the services were held in the Welsh language. As for the Cornish, so for the Welsh: the network of souls who congregated together for religious purposes gained strength and comfort from such gatherings.

Welsh was the language of the eisteddfodau and other cultural gatherings: in fact, it could be argued that while the chapels, eisteddfodau and gatherings were being held, and spoken in Welsh, the self-perpetuation of a 'pure' Welsh culture was assured. Once, however, the association with English speakers and other British customs began - an inevitable occurrence - then the integrity and wholeness of 'Welshness' had been breached, and the loss of cultural cohesiveness within the goldfields colonies had begun.

If eisteddfodau and St. David's Day banquets represented high and colourful spots on the calendar of the Welsh in Ballarat, then the pale wash of everyday life was filled in by the solid cohesiveness of the chapels which we have already seen were an important part of the Victorian/Ballarat scene in the nineteenth century. By 1865 at least twenty-one Welsh chapels were active in Victoria, with five of these in the Ballarat-Sebastopol area,[105] with a combined membership of six hundred and forty-one. Twelve of these were inter-

[105] The number of Welsh chapels varies with different historians. Arthur Hughes offers between twenty-one and twenty-nine chapels in Victoria.

denominational, six were Independent, seven were Calvinistic Methodist, and the remaining four Baptist.

Educational venues for both adults and children were located in the Welsh chapels, which were universally regarded as the "custodians of Welshness".[106] It was in the chapels that the Welsh language was most strongly represented, and that Welsh children, and, indeed, adults who also used the chapels as a place of instruction had access to hearing the language of their own land. As well, the chapels were the moral guardians of the morally destitute 'diggings'. As with the Cornish, some of the newly-arrived Welsh were appalled at the dissolute godlessness of the diggings, and at the similarly disappointing behaviour of their fellow countrymen:

> Many say from the behaviour of life in this country there is no God in this place, many quite hopeful men in Wales descending to every wanton-ness after coming to this country … It is notable how unhealthy for religion is this country, although services are held here three times every Sunday; a sermon in the morning, school at two, and a sermon in the evening. The preacher who is here is a man from the South - all denominations together. The number at school last Sabbath was over 60, and those all Welsh …[107]

For the Welsh, 'chapel' and attendance thereto, was an intrinsic part of existence, something which was a necessary part of life. Carried over from Wales itself, the chapels were part of the nineteenth century contribution to the retention of Welshness; the eisteddfod's great rival in the early days was the chapel, with its workers forming friendly societies and clubbing together to build their own houses.

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[106] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…"p. 184.

As with the homeland scenario, the Welsh in Victoria began their initial religious experiences in a very haphazard sort of way. Faced with the 'make - do' attitude spawned on the dissolute diggings, the earliest diggers seized on any opportunity to sustain their hearts and minds, and attempted to save the moral collapse which they witnessed around them. Their earliest places of worship were humble, rough, and *ad hoc*:

> a corner of the schoolroom of the English Wesleyans - the 'chapel of the Gravel Pits', as it was called, and the only one on Ballarat at the time - was their first meeting place. The Welsh were invited by one of their nation who happened to be a member and an official with that denomination. … They accepted the invitation, and so he was with a few other faithful labourers with a small crowd of English children at one end of the text and a few Welsh at the other end. And although there was a famine of books at one end of the house, there was a sufficiency at the other as each Welshman had his small Bible with him. And indeed at this period however light it was tried to make the swag as one rushed towards the 'rush' care was taken for a place for the Bible in it.[108]

Various descriptions of the first 'chapels' on the diggings all represent the simple faith and sheer determination which the Welsh diggers displayed in trying to establish their religious presence on the goldfields:

> We sat in the tent face to face in one class four each side of it, and well do I remember that some of us were forced to bend so low …
> … but it should be remembered that this was only for the canvas and the wood of the frame; its floor was gravel, and the benches made of slabs split in the forest. Each listener owned his own bench, not through paying rent for it according to the depth of his pocket, but because it was of his own making perhaps by moonlight while guarding the gold ore. The legs of our first benches were not of equal height as each maker had considered his own comfort rather than his

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[107] *Yr Herald Cymraeg*, 28th July, 1855, quoted in Jones, E.G., "The Welsh Independents (Congregationalists) of Australia", *Church Heritage*, Vol. 3, March 1984, p. 244.
[108] *Yr Australydd*, 4, 281 - 3, quoted in Jones, "The Welsh Independents ...", p. 249.

> neighbour's; yet as much pleasure was had from sitting on them by everyone (because they were without debt perhaps) as is had presently sitting on the polished cedar and the vari-coloured cushions.[109]

As in Wales, the chapels in Ballarat offered more than a refuge: with the Sunday Schools, they became something of a forum for the airing and formation of political and religious views. The popularity of the chapel culture ensured that at least the first generation at Ballarat was able to gather and test out political and social theories and ideas which were important to the sense of continuity which the small community was struggling to achieve in the face of extreme isolation and hardship.

The issue of the continuation of the Welsh language became focussed on the chapels. Early Welsh settlers would not acknowledge the possibility of hearing a church service in anything other than the Welsh language, which

Figure 16 Chapel in Ballarat

[109] *Yr Herald Cymraeg,* 28 July, 1855, quoted in Jones, "The Welsh Independents …", 1984, p. 250.

meant that sharing with the Anglican, or indeed any other denomination, was not a consideration.

Arthur Hughes makes much of this necessity for the preservation of the Welsh language, arguing that the survival of Welshness itself was inextricably linked to the preservation of the language and the religion. Chapels which initially played dynamic and vigorous roles because of the enthusiasm of the worshippers and their need for spiritual and secular comfort, in later generations lost their relevance, and hence lost the impetus to achieve the social significance which they had held in the home country. They were,

according to Hughes, "custodians of the Welsh language," [110] but only as long as the Welsh emigrants themselves cared to preserve this bastion of Welshness. The story of the Welsh in Ballarat seems to have been the gradual diminution of this desire, in spite of the urgings and fears of the Welsh community leaders through the pages of the Welsh language press. The pages of *Yr Awstralydd* resound with the call to maintain the language, for in so doing, it was believed, the very culture itself would survive.

Hughes prints a translation of a letter to the editor which appeared in *Yr Awstralydd* in September 1871:

> I have thought deeply and earnestly about the means we should adopt to elevate her [*the Welsh language*] to her rightful standing, to argue her worthiness, to multiply her friends and to permanently silence her enemies … namely:
>
> 1. That no religious denomination anywhere in this colony conducts Sunday School in any language other than Welsh …
> 2. That every minister ceases the habit of announcing hymn numbers and the pages in the hymn book in English …
> 3. That all the Welsh get used to the idea of conversing with each other on matters of business or during social encounters, in Welsh, and not mimic the Englishman by their use of a foreign tongue.
> 4. That every Welshman encourages the spread of the language by purchasing Welsh books.
> 5. That those of the Welsh who are educated write treatises in English on the excellence of the Welsh language, and publish them in English - language journals.
> 6. That all Welsh ministers, of every religious denomination … exhort every Welsh family within the territorial boundaries of their ministries, to converse with their children in Welsh and to establish a Welsh Sunday School in every chapel where there isn't one at present.

[110] Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 185.

7. That Welsh families fight on behalf of their language and take active steps towards its maintenance by educating their children by means of it, and making them aware of its eminence.

Gwladgarwr (Patriot) [111]

But although war had, in a manner of speaking, been declared, and the battle joined at least by a few of the leading Welsh community figures, the fighting was limited to minor skirmishes on the outskirts of the society. The immediacy of the need for the chapels, those 'custodians of Welshness', soon became dissipated in the inchoate mass of goldfields existence.

Whilst the strong faith of the homeland was indispensable for the early pioneers, the structure and framework it provided was soon weakened by the later generations' lack of interest and commitment.

Welsh swagman Joseph Evans detects this deterioration, and is pointed about the demise of the Welsh language:

> I attended a service at the Welsh church. The congregation consisted mostly of children who sang melodiously. The majority of the Welsh community in Maldon attend English churches. They don't keep together like the other nationals do. The main reason is that they wish to be well-versed in the English language.

In the end, Evans despairs: "Too many Welshmen here pretend to understand English better than Welsh and in this way discredit their native tongue.[112] The Swagman is merely echoing the outspokenness of William Meiron Evans

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[111] *Yr Awstralydd*, Vol. 6, No. 1, September, 1871, quoted in Hughes, "Welsh Migrants in Australia…", p. 180.
[112] *Diary of a Welsh Swagman, 1869 - 1894*, Melbourne, 1975, pp. 65, 155, & 172.

and others in *Yr Awstralydd*; the Welsh language and the Welsh religion were being slowly but surely compromised. Significantly, even whilst the eisteddfodau thrived, and chapels flourished, the seeds of disintegration were being sown. The very process of identifying the problem of loss of coherence and viability acknowledged the possibility of defeat, and though it was to be many years before ultimate anonymity, the light of the Welsh presence on Ballarat was starting to dim even while it was at its brightest.

Spiritually, and physically, the role of the Welsh chapel as a "custodian of Welshness" diminished as the century advanced.[113]

There is no doubt that the Welsh possessed certain skills, as did the Cornish, which made them desirable emigrants for the development-hungry lands in the south, but in the end, the particularity of the Welsh presence was overwhelmed by the new circumstances of the world in which they found themselves. The players in this new game were not unfamiliar, but never before had they all co-existed to such an extent, and in such an alien and contrary environment.

Welsh emigrants to Ballarat had to cope with the reality of a turbulent economy, a political maelstrom, and a cultural melting pot, and like nineteenth century Welshmen in Wales, found that "no tradition offered any

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[113] The records of the Welsh Carmel Church in Sebastopol, whilst disappointingly meagre from a historian's point of view, are of particular interest for the fact that they are written entirely in the Welsh language until c.1888 - 1890, when, without exception, they become Anglicised. It seems that the congregation's record - keepers could no longer sustain the language.
Records of the Welsh Carmel Church, Sebastopol; date range c. 1863 - 1920, with occasional entries 1977, 1984; also includes a few newspaper cuttings relating to the Jubilee of the Church in 1918.

answer. They had to find their own."[114] The Welsh in Ballarat were similarly forced to seek their own reality; once this process was set in train, there could be no turning back. Throughout the century, whilst in Ballarat leading Welshmen were espousing their most strongly-felt devotion to all things Welsh, and maintaining with every fibre of their being their inherent and unshakeable 'Welshness', the Welsh community of Ballarat was slowly but surely inexorably moving away from the idea of being Welsh. Welsh sermons were discontinued, eisteddfodau changed their nature; even as the pundits had predicted, Welsh culture in Ballarat was disappearing.

In effect, by the end of the century, Ballarat itself could have been said to have been characterised in part by dominant 'statesman/pioneers' - the old brigade of community leaders whose origins spanned almost the entire generation at Ballarat. These men were unlikely to allow the niceties of individual nationalism to stand in the way of presenting Ballarat to its best advantage when it came to business and social dealings. Ballarat was beginning to emerge onto the larger national stage, and, seen in terms of such large stakes, the petty concerns of racial derivations seemed to matter less and less. Assimilation was not only inevitable, but *necessary*. Celebrations of national days like St. David's Day - a useful barometer for assessing Welsh vigour - had petered out by the early 1900s, so that newspaper searches for descriptions of such activities are fruitless. It was simply not acknowledged.

Weston Bate has described this mature Ballarat in his chapter entitled "Golden City". By the end of the century it was clear that the main focus of those people who lived in Ballarat, and had done so for half a century, was to

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[114] Williams, Gwyn A., *When Was Wales?* London, 1985, pp. 189 - 191.

promote the idea of a city taut with promise for the new century, economically secure, in fact,

> a work of art consciously achieved by group of pioneers who had satisfied their own taste and provided for posterity by promoting some of the most urbane elements of European culture…[115]

R.E. Williams, writing in the *Courier* in 1890, [116] spoke of

> The go-aheadism of the Ballarat people is proverbial, and the wonderful results achieved of late years are deserving of the highest recommendation. The gentlemen who have made their fortunes in mining or other pursuits all seemed imbued with the one spirit, that of adding to the beauty of the Golden City.

Welsh community leaders, in common with other leaders in Ballarat, were preparing throughout the seventies and eighties to marry their allegiances to Wales with their awareness of the necessity to bring Anglicization into the emigrant equation. By the nineties, their mission had been so successful that the Welsh as a formal, coherent and separate presence on Ballarat had almost entirely disappeared. The seeds for disintegration were being sown as early as the 1865 Eisteddfod, where the *Star* reported the President of the Third National Eisteddfod, Rev. J. Farr (Minister of the Independent (Welsh) Church, in Sebastopol), thus:

> The Eisteddfod is our only national institution where we forget all our distinctive peculiarities and disagreements in the great fact that we are Welsh … A great error has prevailed, and still prevails … that the primary object of this institution is the prevention of the English language spreading and the retaining, therefore, of the Welsh language

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[115] Bate, *Lucky City,* pp. 220 - 250.
[116] R.E. Williams, writing in the *Courier*, 12 June,1890, p.1, quoted in Bate, p. 220.

> as our only tongue … And some of our fellow colonists have fallen into the same error by supposing that our only aim is to prevent our children being acquainted with the English language and from coming out of their national circle. If the assertion be true, what is the meaning of sending our children to the best educational establishments in the city of Melbourne? … I fully endorse the sentiments of Sir Thomas Lloyd the President of one of our national Eisteddfods in Wales, when he urged his countrymen to cling to the Welsh language on Sabbath days, because it was the language of the pulpit [and] Sabbath schools, the language in which they were taught to whisper the first prayer, in short the language of religion; but when Monday morning came he counselled them to learn and to speak the English … the language of commerce and of the most enterprising nation on the face of the earth.[117]

Dislike of the English was not as evident in this statement as a fairly pragmatic attitude which simultaneously endorsed 'Welshness' and yet embraced "the language of commerce", English. The logic was obvious, but paradoxical. At the very highest point of the expression of Welsh cultural achievement in Ballarat, those most directly responsible for nurturing that achievement for future generations were urging a compromise situation by espousing both the Welsh *and* the English causes.

In the end, the Welsh of Ballarat moved quietly and almost unobtrusively from being committed, patriotic Welshmen to citizens of a larger empire. Such a concept safely accommodated the *fait accompli* of lost nationality and group coherence, and explains their eventual departure from the Ballarat stage. They had become Britons, and were more interested in proclaiming allegiance to Queen and country than asserting their Welshness; furthermore, their assimilation had set them on the evolutionary path towards becoming Australians. They no longer saw their future as one set aside from the rest of

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[117] *Ballarat Star*, 27 December, 1865.

Ballarat society. The gradual disappearance of their cultural institutions meant that they had indeed become "a scattered and not a united people".[118]

Figure 17 Welshmen dancing in Ballarat

[118] *Star,* 4 March 1868, p.4.

CHAPTER

4

The Scottish:

Builders and Beautifiers

"Where are they now, that stalwart band of energetic Scotsmen?"[1]

The fabric of Ballarat society as it was woven in the nineteenth century, was consistent with other emerging gold towns such as Bendigo[2], and was bound together by the tensions generated by the co-existence of many racial and cultural groups. The emigrants from Scotland formed an integral part of what the Ballarat historian W.B. Withers described as the "warp" and the "woof" of the "one indivisible people"[3], and their quiet, determined presence in the city shaped its built beauty and reflected former glory, while melding new loyalties to their adopted city and other ethnic groups.

This chapter identifies the importance of the Scottish heritage of an educated, God-fearing and determined settler, whose greatest quality - derived largely

[1] *Ballarat Star*, 3 July, 1880.
[2] "They were a strangely assorted crowd who sat dishing the gravels of old Bendigo's creek in the early fifties - Scottish crofter and Irish farm-hands, old lags from Van Dieman's land and pale-faced London clerks, military refugees from Hungary and Poland, Frenchmen and German exiles, Cantonese in coolie hats and Yankie diggers who had chased the 'mother lode' in Nevada and Sacramento Valley. … despite barriers of language and cultural and racial differences a camaraderie existed, although it did not preclude a marked tendency to segregate in national groups." Cusack, *Bendigo a history,* p. 55.
[3] Withers, *History of Ballarat,* p. 323.

from this heritage - was perhaps his ability to work solidly and unobtrusively towards the creation of a financially and morally successful society.

The chapter will investigate these specific qualities, and examine the ways in which they helped to shape a society whose defining feature was, at least initially, formlessness. "Builders and beautifiers", the Scots of Ballarat brought to the Ballarat melting pot their staunch Presbyterianism, their pragmatism, and their deeply-felt need to materially immortalise in Ballarat a heritage which was becoming less and less relevant to the society in which they had chosen to live. The chapter selects several examples of the celebrations of this Scottish heritage, and traces the demise of these same events, offering an explanation as to why they did, indeed, ultimately decline. The chapter follows the movement of the Scottish emigrants up onto the more prestigious moral and physical 'high ground' of Ballarat, where their business acumen and financial skill flourished, and their spiritual needs were cherished. The chapter seeks to establish, through an analysis of some Scottish men of the Ballarat church, some understanding of the importance of the Presbyterian religion to these emigrants, and also to demonstrate the way in which the powerful adherence to this religion was a means by which the Scots of Ballarat affirmed their wealth and success in the eyes of an otherwise provident and austere God. Finally, the chapter seeks to understand the nature of the Scottish assimilation into Ballarat society in terms of this thesis' new understanding of the ways in which each Celtic group in Ballarat moved together towards a less Celtic, yet more 'Australian' outlook.

> On 24 May, 1889, the trustees of the late Mr. J. Russell Thompson formally handed over to the citizens of Ballarat their trust as regards the bequest to the city.[4]

Thus wrote the *Ballarat Star* as it reported on the final stage in the magnificent bequest made by one of Ballarat's great Scottish gentlemen to his beloved Ballarat. Thompson's legacy to Ballarat in many ways epitomised the legacy of the Scots to this city. They created a city of statues which have become no more and no less than marble intimations of a heritage transformed, from a country long forgotten.

Thompson was a successful businessman hailing from Airdrie, in Ayrshire, Scotland, who had arrived in Ballarat in 1853 after finding gold on the Ovens goldfields. An early career in mining on Ballarat (the Republic mine, on the present site of the Base Hospital) caused deafness which was to plague him in later life, and prevented him from taking any prominent part in Ballarat public affairs. Apart from some brief glory through being involved in the Eureka affair as a Juror on the inquest into the trial of James Scobie, Thompson reportedly led a quiet life, and died on 26 May, 1886. Despite heavy business losses in the latter part of his life, Thompson died a wealthy man, and was able to leave substantial bequests to relatives, and - most gratifyingly - directed that the residue of his estate be put towards the purchase of statuary with which to beautify the gardens of the city in which he had spent most of his life. Thomas Stoddart, fellow Scotsman, executor of Thompson's estate, and himself a benefactor of Ballarat, was empowered by Thompson's will to "make some presentation to the City"[5]; Stoddart

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[4] *Ballarat Star,* 25 May, 1889.

[5] Kimberly, W.B. (ed.), *Ballarat and Vicinity A Condensed but Comprehensive Account of her Financial, Commercial, Manufacturing, Mining, and Agricultural Enterprises; Her Progress and Population in the Past and Possibilities in the Future,* F.W.Niven, Ballarat, 1894, pp. 166-167.

therefore "assisted in procuring the beautiful statuary which now adorns the alcove at the entrance to the Botanical Gardens"[6]. Most particularly, Stoddart chose to complete Thompson's legacy by acquiring for the City a statue of the Scottish hero William Wallace:

> the statue of Wallace was decided on as a compliment to Mr. Thompson's love for the country he came from - an effigy of the greatest character treated of in Scottish history or legend.[7]

The statue, sculpted by Melbourne sculptor Mr. Percival Ball, was created from marble, on a granite base, and was unveiled on Queen Victoria's birthday (and that of the donor), 24 May 1889. It represented Wallace as standing upon Abbey Craig, watching for the precise moment when a blast upon the horn hanging at his side would give the signal for his forces to fall upon the English as they cross Stirling Bridge. According to the *Star*, the figure was of

> heroic size, standing, as the great patriot is said by legend to have stood, over eight feet in height. His powerful figure is clad in a close-fitting suit of chain armor, which well displays the muscular development of the stalwart frame. The arms are bare to just above the elbow, and the large muscles stand out in cords through the armor. Both hands are grasping a representation of the immense sword that in Wallace's hands wrought such havoc amongst his foes. Over the figure is a light surcoat, with [the] lion of Scotland emblazoned on the breast, and on the head is a simple morion, so that the features are not hidden by a vizor. These are most expressive, representing a stern resolve to do or die, not unmixed with anxiety, and full of vigilance and observation. The pose is natural and effective, and the *tout ensemble* is pleasing to the eye.[8]

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[6] Kimberly, *Ballarat and Vicinity*, p. 167.
[7] *Ballarat Star,* 25 May, 1889.

The unveiling was a momentous occasion, with a special train coming up from Melbourne bringing over a hundred visitors connected with the Caledonian societies in that metropolis. Met by Thomas Stoddart at the Western Railway Station, the party proceeded in cabs and on tramcars to the gardens, where they were met by another of Thompson's executors, Mr. H.A. Nevett, who escorted them to the enclosure around the statue. It would have been a splendid sight - at least twenty of the party were in Highland costume, with the tartans of the Ross, Lindsay, Gordon, Stuart, McKenzie and Mackay clans represented. The colourful party was headed by four pipers, with dancers in full dress, who played (and danced) as the guests assembled. The members of the St. Andrew's Society, headed by their Grand Master, Br. Lyle, were there in large numbers, in full regalia, and some of the assembled Ballarat dignitaries were also in Scottish dress. At the entrance to the enclosure, Lieutenant-Colonel Greenfield and his Militia mustered strongly, with the Militia band in attendance and entertaining the assembled multitudes with a selection of appropriate airs. It was estimated that approximately three thousand people had gathered for the event. Proceedings then commenced with a procession of pipers around the statue playing what the *Courier* described breathlessly as a "thrilling air".[9] Over all floated the banner on which was emblazoned the red lion of Scotland.

The inevitable speeches followed, with the usual sentiments expressed, and particular attention was paid to the honouring of the burden of responsibility laid on the executors of the Thompson estate to deploy the specified funds on items for the cultural beautification of Ballarat. Such a charge was taken extremely seriously by those involved, and Mr. Nevett now offered the

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[8] *Ballarat Star,* 25 May, 1889.
[9] *Ballarat Courier,* 25 May, 1889.

citizens of Ballarat the opportunity to judge "whether the trust had been faithfully carried out."

The Hon. J. Nimmo then pulled a string, and the drapery fell from the statue of Sir William Wallace, "revealing the figure in all its beauty". Loud cheers acknowledged the approbation of the Ballarat citizens, and the Militia band played "*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*".

The speech by the Hon. J. Nimmo (MLA, Minister for Public Works) which followed is a fascinating exercise in 'Imperial wriggling', wherein the honourable gentleman, in extolling the virtues of the Scottish hero, found himself, by default, in the unfortunate position of needing to be extremely critical of the actions of the English king, Edward 1.

The intellectual contortions involved in praising the hero, after all, of the day, and yet attempting to remain true to the ideal of British justice and fair play which should have prevailed - and quite obviously did not where Wallace was concerned - were quite considerable. Nimmo ends by excusing Edward's dastardly behaviour on the grounds that he was "not a true Englishman"!

> The freedom enjoyed by Scotland at the present hour is directly traceable to the patriotic efforts of Sir William Wallace 600 years ago; and his name shrouded in a halo of honour and glory, has come down through that long vista of years, until here this day in the noble city of Ballarat I see before me thousands of her public-spirited and high-minded citizens met to do honour to the memory of that brave man who struggled, fought, suffered, and died as a patriot martyr in the cause of national liberty. (Cheers) … I have long been of the opinion that Edward 1 was not a true Englishman, and I am sure he did not represent the English character truly. (Cheers) I have always found in

> my dealings with the English that they are, as a body, high-souled and honourable men. (Cheers) I am sure they were misled by Edward … I have found the English one of the first nations in the world as regards fair and honourable dealings between man and man, and for bravery and generosity.[10]

In a speech which resounded with ringing affirmations of the truth and nobility of the British way, Nimmo managed to embrace most of the high-minded sentiments inherent in such a principle, and turned the day's event into a celebration of the happy assimilation of Ballarat's Celtic races under British rule. The entire occasion, and the sentiments expressed, provide valuable evidence of the cultural intermingling which was beginning to be a feature of Ballarat society in the latter half of the century. As much as each ethnic group wished to display its own particular nationality, the benevolence with which it was felt new ventures should be undertaken tended to undermine parochial loyalties in favour of a more broadly-based munificence. 'Parochial' in this sense refers to efforts by individuals to portray themselves as both 'Scottish', harking back to misty memories of heather-clad hills and tartan clad pipers, whilst acknowledging, in their rhetoric, their new-found allegiance to Ballarat:

> I am proud to see amongst the audience Englishmen and Irishmen mingling with Scotchmen. … I thank God that England and Scotland have shaken hands, and for many years have united in fighting for that tight little island side by side. (Cheers) I pray that this state of things may long continue, and that the noble and glorious Queen who now reigns over us may long continue to do so. (Renewed cheers).[11]

Even St. Patrick's sons received an almost apologetic inclusion in the general effusion of bonhomie which the event occasioned:

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[10] *Ballarat Star,* 25 May, 1889.
[11] *Ballarat Star,* 25 May, 1889.

> The Irish, too, I am pleased to see here. They are a brave and noble race - a little impulsive, perhaps, but amongst them I have found as much genuine manliness and real good feeling as I have amongst the Scotch. (Cheers). [12]

The effusion of the moment had allowed those present to admit, with some surprise, that *even* the Irish had good qualities, if taken in the larger historical context. The event was an interesting example of the blurring of national boundaries - in this case, English, Scottish and Irish - which in part defined the evolution of Ballarat society in the latter part of the nineteenth century.
Mr. Nimmo concluded his address by repeating a stanza from the Bard of Scotland (Burns), in which mention was made of Wallace.

After appropriate tribute had been paid to the artistic merits of the sculptor, Percival Ball, and further platitudes had been uttered, which evinced further cheering, a final call was made for three cheers for His Worship the Mayor, the trustees, and the artist, to which the audience responded "lustily". The band played "God Save the Queen", the assemblage sang a verse of "Auld Lang Syne", and the gathering dispersed.

The last word on Ballarat's Wallace, however, had not, by any means, been said. The day was yet young, and the visiting pilgrims were to gather yet again for a Banquet at the City Hall. After the "excellent luncheon" had been consumed, more speeches followed, and the 'Celtic' trend - probably unconsciously - was continued when distinguished Cornishman R.M. Serjeant was called upon to propose the toast to "The Ministry". After a short political jibe, Serjeant called for the erection of yet more statuary in the shape of a bust

of Thompson which should be placed in the City Hall to honour that gentleman's praiseworthy contribution to Ballarat's beauty. Mr. Nimmo applauded the sentiment, and added that Mr. Thompson's benevolence was proof, if it was needed, that the traditional perception that Scotchmen were "close fisted" was untrue. Mr. J. Russell was hopeful, he said, that the Hon. Mr. Nimmo would place an extra £500 on the estimates for placing a pavilion over Wallace's statue, and Mr. J.W. Kirton, in a somewhat belligerent tone, said that he was as proud of being a native of Australia as a Scotchman was of Scotland. (In a political aside, Kirton did not lose the opportunity to score a political point: he said that he looked forward to the day when his parliamentary colleague, Colonel Smith, would pass away, and he could step into his shoes!).

Mr. Wilson, one of the Thompson trustees, gave a short resume of benefactor Thompson's life, and, while applauding Serjeant's suggestion of a bust to honour him, regretted that this would not be possible because there was no portrait or likeness of the man available. It would seem, interestingly, that the brief for the beautification and glorification of Ballarat had passed to all citizens, so that Serjeant (a Cornishman) could advocate such a proposal within the very specific Scottish context of the Wallace statue unveiling, and no-one seemed at all surprised. Individual Celtic loyalties were subsumed by the driving consideration to promote the city of their adoption. Tom Griffiths, writing on "The Ethic of Progress", points out that country towns, which were generally oriented to outsiders and passers-by, had to present an appearance which was both "testimony to past progress and a hopeful lure for more."[13] Griffiths points out that the founders of gold towns (like Ballarat) expressed

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[12] *Ballarat Star*, 25 May, 1889.

their "wonder and boastfulness" in their buildings; buildings and statues, as they appeared in great profusion in Ballarat, particularly in the latter half of the century, and largely funded by Scottish money, speak to the historian of the driving desire on the part of the citizens of this city to both celebrate their success, and confirm their presence. Many of the gold towns attempted to glorify their achievements via the built environment, but probably none were quite as grandiose and self-congratulatory as Ballarat and Bendigo.[14] As Griffiths argues, "the built environment is a legacy as much of anxiety and decline as it is of confidence and progress"[15]. Fear of being forgotten mingled with an underlying anxiety at the encroaching spectre of Melbourne, and this loomed ever more largely in the Ballarat imagination. A corresponding desire to build monumentally, not just to celebrate the glorious past, but to act as a bulwark against decline, was one of the considerations which inspired occasions like the Wallace statue building and unveiling. Monuments such as these made an emphatic statement about the importance of links to a noble and heroic past, and hope for a prosperous and united future.

Mr. James Lambie, in proposing the toast to the sculptor, speculated on the relevance of such a work of art to the young people of the community.

> It was a proud day for Ballarat, (*he said*) that its history should be wedded with the early history of his (the speaker's) native country.… Some people wondered why they should bother about heroes of the

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[13] Griffiths, Tom, "Country Towns", in *A Heritage Handbook*, edited by Graeme Davison and Chris McConville, for the Monash Public History Group, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991, p. 142.

[14] [in the seventies] "many … pretentious buildings were under construction. Vahland's [Bendigo architect] drawing boards were crowded with Italianate facades, with Corinthian columns and ornate pediments, with decorative urns and spilling cornucopias, to embellish new halls and banks and business premises rising in stucco extravagance to symbolise the new prosperity." Cusack, *Bendigo a history,* pp. 158 - 159.

[15] Griffiths, "Country Towns", in *A Heritage Handbook*, eds. Davison and McConville, 1991, p. 143.

> past, but even if the tales of the heroes were not true they were of extreme value if they gave inspiration to the young. They should cherish the heroes of the past, and all people who enjoyed English liberty should honor (sic) the Scottish hero and join in his praise. He (Mr. Lambie) was just as ready to bow down before a hero of Southern England as a Scottish hero. It was Wallace who first discovered the value of the masses of the people, and the best blood of the Scottish people came from the lonely farmers in the distant moors and the small villages outside the towns. (Applause)[16]

Mr. Lambie is here drawing explicitly on the experience of the past, which should be used to shore up the future. He continued in the same vein, though a nice touch of whimsy thankfully pervaded his final remarks; he claimed for Scotland and the Scottish a "wonderful power of absorption" , and caused much mirth by suggesting that it would not be long before they annexed the colonies as they had annexed England. Scotchmen, he claimed, were everywhere foremost. The tone of the speech became fanciful: it was suggested that Scotchmen had a good deal to do with England's possession of India, and he was positive that it was Scotchmen who won the battle of Waterloo! On such a note Mr. Lambie ended, and Mr. McEwan sang *Scots wae hae*. (Again.)

Further speeches, responses and toasts were given, and the afternoon finally drew to a close. Mr. Burton sang the final song which, with magnificent inappropriateness, was entitled "*Steer my bark to Erin's Isle*", in itself a mark of tolerance and an acknowledgment of the increasing ease with which the different ethnic groups were beginning to co-exist in Ballarat. The occasion had provided a fascinating example of cross-cultural convergence; distance and provincialism had blurred the sharp edges of national memory. The

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[16] *Ballarat Courier*, 25th May, 1889.

necessity for all ethnic groups to be able to live together with a shared remembrance had blunted long-standing parochial prejudices.

The kingdom of Scotland is the most northerly of the four parts of the United Kingdom, and occupies about one-third of the island of Great Britain. Scotland is bounded by England on the south, and by the Atlantic Ocean on two sides, and the North Sea on the east. Most places in Scotland, like Cornwall, are usually within forty or fifty miles of the sea.

The name "Scotland" (Latin *Scotia*) derives from the Scots, who were a Celtic people from Ireland who settled on the west coast in about the fifth century. The kingdom of the Scots gradually gained control over neighbouring peoples until by the eleventh century, they ruled over roughly the country's modern mainland area. Their timeless enemy has always been England, and earlier medieval struggles for supremacy against that power were successful; however, in 1603 the King of the Scots also became King of England, and in 1707 Scotland's parliament was joined to that of England. Scotland did not, therefore, in the nineteenth century, have a separate legislature or executive, and its economy was integrated into that of the rest of Britain. The kingdom did, however, have a separate administration, and certain important aspects of national life were preserved at the Union of 1707, notably its radically different legal and educational systems, and its Presbyterian national church.[17]

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[17] *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Volume 29, Macropædia, 15th Edition, Chicago: Benton, 1974, 1987, p. 103.

Nineteenth century Scotland, like Wales, was at the heart of the massive Industrial Revolution which transformed Britain, and which largely created the population pool which finished up travelling to the Antipodes in search of gold and a new life.

"From the currents of the age, Scotland was in no way exempted."[18]

The characteristics of the Scottish folk who emigrated to Ballarat can be understood more clearly if regarded in the light of the world from which they came.

The suffering, hopes, and fears of a world in transition touched the people of Scotland in ways significant for the development of the New World. As in Wales, the population of Scotland underwent a dramatic upsurge in the eighteenth century. In 1700, there were about one million people; by 1900, nearly four-and-a-half million, with spectacular increases in the manufacturing towns. Such a change was due in part to the migration of hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine of 1846 - 50. As well, a certain percentage moved from the country to the towns, so that in some cases, there was a percentage population increase in the towns, whilst in others, there was an overall decrease as people moved away from Scotland altogether, either overseas, or to England. The most important reason for the movement towards the towns was the dramatic advance in the development of heavy industry. Coal and iron production rose, and the mighty Clydeside shipbuilding industry flourished. Glasgow, "the squalid industrial megalopolis of textiles and engineering"[19] was the largest of the

[18] Smout, T.C., *A Century of the Scottish People 1830 - 1950*, Collins, London, 1986, p. 7.
[19] Smout, *Century of the Scottish People,* p. 8.

industrial towns, but Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Paisley also experienced varying population growth.

Historians have detected in these frighteningly expanded and transformed industrial wildernesses two types of Scots: the manufacturer, whose monetary gains elevated him to a pseudo-aristocracy, and the workers, who manned his industries.

Of the former, Wallace Notestein has written:

> The Scottish manufacturer - or his father before him - had often been a handicraftsman of some kind, … and by his own inventiveness or enterprise improved his position and become a small-scale or even a large scale manufacturer. In more cases he was a small man who grasped a business chance in his community made possible by the new inventions. He was likely to be a narrow, hard-bitten man of little culture or breadth of view, passionate in his pursuit of his expanding schemes, and with little time to spare for other things. His early experience had been parochial and his business connections did not much widen his outlook.
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> He and his kind transformed Scotland within two generations. The talk of his friends was of machines and ships and markets. Scotland was on the up and up. Businessmen became the predominant feature of the Scottish landscape. They were in the front of the picture, and professional people ceased to be as important as they had been in the Periclean Ages. Business ruled the roost.[20]

As well as the popular perception of the Scottish industrialist, there remained the rural dweller - the Scot of the villages - and the Highlanders, who lived in the world's perception as the genuine 'Scot' despite the image being rooted more in the imagination than in the reality.

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[20] Notestein, Wallace, *The Scot in History* , Jonathan Cape, London, 1946, p. 284.

The popular image of the Scotsman was generally a romanticised version of the Scottish Highlander - a glamorous, whisky-swilling, tartan-clad figure, shrouded in mist, striding across the heather in the land of the mountain and the flood. This is, of course, barely half the picture, and as much as it can be said to be accurate of some small numbers of Scots, amongst those who migrated it is far from accurate; in much the same way the popular image of the 'Irish Paddy' does not tell the true tale of the kind of Irishman who migrated to Australia.

Walter Murdoch describes the importance of this dichotomy of images in his essay entitled "The Scottish Twins"; he maintains that the only way to understand the Scot clearly is

> to recognise that there are two Scotlands. One is the Scotland of poetry and romance, of Wallace, and Bruce, and Montrose, and Queen Mary, the tragic queen whose tale has been told by so many poets and novelists.

This is the Scotland of Sir Walter Scott,

> the Scotland that was the home of courage and honour and loyalty no less heroic because it was loyalty to lost causes and sometimes to unworthy chieftains.

On the other hand, Murdoch points out,

> there is also the Scotland of the Glasgow merchant …the most prosaic of all creatures; the Scotland of the canny and parsimonious Scotsman.[21]

And as Murdoch goes on to say, the paradox of the Scot is that he contained within himself both these elements; each inseparable from the other. It is important to understand the popular perceptions of the Scot, for it was these images which were transferred and acted upon once the Scottish emigrants reached Australia.

The truth of the Scottish national image is probably something less than popular opinion would have us believe, but, Prentis pointed out, the objective accuracy of such an image is less important than the understanding of its existence, and the "widespread belief" in its reality.[22] In a situation far removed from Scotland ('home'), the possession of a firm self-image helped the Scots to establish themselves in a fluid society. Much as the Cornish stood by their mining expertise and staunch Methodism, and the Welsh their intellectual heritage, so the Scots referred to their image as practical, hardworking and successful members of society, with the legacy of the 'romance of the highlands' thrown in for good measure.

Despite, or perhaps because of, qualities of assimilation, the Scots have been universally recognised for many years as most successful emigrants. Gordon Donaldson quotes Sir Charles Dilke as summarising their achievements:

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[21] Murdoch, Walter, "The Scottish Twins", in *Selected Essays*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1956, p. 89.
[22] Prentis, Malcolm, *Scots in Australia, A Study of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, 1788-1900,* Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1983, p. 14.

> In British settlements, from Canada to Ceylon, from Dunedin to Bombay, for every Englishman that you meet who has worked himself up to wealth from small beginnings without external aid, you find ten Scotchmen. …. Half the most prominent among the statesmen of the Canadian Confederation, of Victoria and of Queensland, are born Scots, and all the great merchants of India are of the same nation … Wherever abroad you come across a Scotchman, you invariably find him prosperous and respected.[23]

As Eric Richards points out, in the nineteenth century the Scots were second only to Ireland among the world's great emigrant nations.[24] At the risk of summoning up cultural stereotypes which oversimplify a situation, it is certainly reasonable to claim that the emigrants who travelled to Australia in the latter half of the nineteenth century mostly represented what Richards has called the "emerging industrial proletariat" of the south. They reflected the 'new' Scotland; they also contained within their ranks those elements of the more rural Scot, and the displaced Highland emigre which gave rise to the romanticised views of the tartan-clad highlander which struck such a sentimental chord in countries to which they emigrated.

Emigration to Australia

> Scholar, soldier and merchant: three traditional overseas avenues of advancement for the adventurous Scot from the Middle Ages to the present. With the addition of farmer and artisan, these were broadly the categories of Scots who found their way to Australia in the nineteenth century.[25]

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[23] Sir Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (1888), pp 525, and 365-366, in Donaldson, Gordon: *The Scots Overseas,* pp. 206 - 207.

[24] Richards, Eric, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora", in *Stories of Australian Migration*, ed. John Hardy, NSW University Press, Sydney, 1988, p. 51.

Of the approximately one-and-a-half million British and Irish immigrants who arrived in Australia between 1788 and 1900, around two hundred and thirty thousand of them were Scottish. Based on government-assisted immigrants, Crowley estimates that for the period 1860-1919 the percentage figure for Scottish emigration to Australia is around 13.1%. Prentis calculates that around 14-16% would be a "reasonable combined estimate" for Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, that is, between 160,000 and 180,000 Scots immigrated into the Eastern Australian mainland between 1851 and 1900.

As Prentis points out, it is clear that Scottish immigrants continued to favour Victoria noticeably over Queensland, and New South Wales, and suggests that

> the Scottish hunger for land and the almost accidental accumulation of favourable publicity for Victoria in Scotland through letters to relatives and friends, newspapers, books, and publicists like Lang, plus the clannishness of Scots settlers, would appear to account for the preference for Victoria.[26]

Eric Richards, too, takes up this longing for land as being at the centre of the Scottish motivation to emigrate: "The key", he claims, "to the aspirations of these peasant migrants was land itself - because access to land meant freedom."

Richards believes that it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of land as a central theme in Scottish (and other) emigration:

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[25] Prentis, *Scots in Australia*, p. 12.

> Many people came with a clear expectation of obtaining land which, for them, implied independence, a means of liberation from landlords, from taxes, from religious oppression, from political domination, and from insecurity in all its forms.[27]

Richards is speaking here predominantly of those Scots who migrated from the Highlands of Scotland as a result of the Highland clearances. Their main purpose, indeed, was to escape the crippling subsistence existence and bitter poverty of life in the Western Highlands of Scotland - that is, supposing that the clearances had not forced them out of even that level of existence, and reduced them to a state of dependence on the government. These were the folk for whom emigration, despite its obvious trauma, was virtually the only option, and a significant proportion of these folk made up the emigration figures to Australia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For the people clinging to existence on the tiny crofts of the Scottish highlands, the benefits of industrialisation and prosperity as it affected the larger cities and general populace of Scotland were felt little, if at all. Ironically, it was from this part of the Scottish world that the most familiar image of the Scottish emigrant was drawn, but the reality was grinding poverty and a relentless battle for existence in a grim, harsh climate with no immediate prospect of improvement.

Yet Richards himself is careful to point out that this image of the Scottish emigre falsifies the true picture of Scottish emigration to Australia. He points out that blatant national stereotyping "a ritual invocation of the ambitious, canny, Calvinistic Scot, the successful capitalist in tartan, much addicted to bagpipes, Caledonian societies and Burns' nights" in fact damages the "sheer

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[26] Prentis, *Scots in Australia,* p. 68.
[27] Richards, Eric, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora" in Hardy, *Stories of Australian Migration,* Sydney, 1988, p. 56.

richness"[28] of the Scottish presence in Australia; he argues for a closer study of the Scot via an examination of "particular lives" which demonstrate "the expectations and realities of the transition of Scots to Australians."[29]

The overall picture of Scottish migration to Australia (and Victoria, and Ballarat) far from fulfils the stereotype of the Scottish emigrant: the motives for leaving Scotland could be as varied as the reasons for the choice of destination. The possibility of owning land, as indicated earlier, was a clear motivation for some, particularly those 'moderate capitalists' from the north-east; for those who came from the newly-industrialised cities and towns it was simply a hope of finding a greater independence and security; for the Highlanders it was a case, often, of emigrate or perish. In each case, it is impossible to offer an order of importance, since each individual decision would have been taken on the basis of a specific combination of circumstances, probably involving family connections, discontent with conditions at home, knowledge of better opportunities abroad, overall changing social, economic and political conditions and changing attitudes to emigration *per se*.[30]

In the larger landscape of Australia, both culturally and physically, the emigrant Scot experienced nostalgia for an idealised memory of the Scottish homeland, and ultimately created his own emigrant 'tension' by juxtaposing such memories against the necessity to merge comfortably and quietly into colonial society. In fact, to subscribe to such an image already intimated a loss of contact with the homeland, and therefore a less realistic perception of

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[28] Richards, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora", p. 52.
[29] Richards, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora", p. 53.
[30] See Harper, Marjory, *Emigration from North-East Scotland Volume 1 Willing Exiles,* Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1988, pp. 342 ff.

the same. Distance, necessity to adapt, age, pressures to redefine themselves against different cultures, younger generations, all contributed to fading memories of an already distorted reality. Any consideration of the Scottish in Ballarat must certainly take into account the nature of this conflict, and the effect of its outcome.

Assisted Immigrants

Leaving on one side, for the moment, the significance of the stereotypical Scot in Australian history, a small amount of detail is available about the statistical picture of those Scots who came to Australia.

The majority of Scots assisted immigrants who came to Eastern Australia came from the industrialised Lowland areas such as Glasgow and Clydeside, Edinburgh, Dundee, West Lothian, Fife, and Stirlingshire, with the balance from Aberdeenshire and Ayrshire. A slightly higher percentage of Highlanders came to Victoria than to either Queensland or New South Wales.[31]

Coughlan's figures studying the Irish in Victoria between 1850 and 1870 also draw a demographic profile of the Scottish: he found that, whereas 89% of the Irish who came to Victoria were unskilled, only 50% of the English and Scottish were thus. Furthermore, only 7% of the Irish men had some commercial experience, whilst 28% of the English and Scottish were in this category. 'Gentlemen' and professional men - doctors, lawyers, and clergy -

[31] Prentis, *Scots in Australia,* p. 75.

comprised only 2% of the Irish total, whereas they made up 9% of the English and the Scots.[32]

Prentis also looks at the literacy levels, age composition, religion, masculinity rate and marital state of the Scots in Eastern Australia, and sums up the general picture of "the typical Scots assisted immigrant" thus:

> If an adult, he was very likely married, literate, urban, Presbyterian, and possessed of a skill of some kind. A secondary alternative would be unmarried, Free Kirk, and a shepherd or farm labourer - this latter type was commoner amongst those going to Victoria.[33]

Unassisted Immigrants

This category is a much harder one to assess, given the difficulties of obtaining figures, but it is an important one as far as the Scots who came to Australia were concerned. We know that at least 605,000 unassisted immigrants travelled to Australia between 1851 and 1900. Many of these (around 487,000) arrived in Victoria. Approximately 35% of Scottish immigrants were unassisted; a significant proportion were professional men, but most of them (based on the limited figures available) would seem to have been in the skilled trades, labourers, and agricultural labourer classes. It is tempting to look for the better-educated amongst Scottish unassisted immigrants. Serle, in *The Golden Age* quotes "a Scottish newspaper" which notes the departure of "some of our best workmen", "well-behaved and energetic young men … of the most respectable class" …"first class tradesmen

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[32] Coughlan, Neil, "The Coming of the Irish to Victoria", *Historical Studies*, 12, October, 1965, p. 84.
[33] Prentis, *Scots in Australia,* p. 78.

from the country"[34], and both Prentis and Serle point out that a high proportion of the unassisted immigrants were men.

Prentis supplies a rough assessment of the types of Scottish unassisted immigrants who travelled to eastern Australia: ministers, teachers, academics, doctors, businessmen, merchants, bankers, men going on the land - again, a wide range, extending from wealthy graziers to smaller capital holders.

Richard Broome suggests that Scots in Victoria were (by 1900) "well-represented among land-owners, the self-employed, bankers, businessmen and politicians".[35] He points out that the Scottish in Victoria tended to "quickly become invisible", like the English, because they placed success above the maintenance of ethnic awareness. Nostalgia for 'home', at least by the second generation of Scottish settlers, was mitigated by developing loyalties and commitments to the new land.[36] Broome makes the point that, for Victoria generally, Scottish celebrations like Caledonian Games tended to blur into celebrations in which the whole town or district, rather than just the Scottish minority, took part.

Scottish migration to Victoria, then, can be seen to have encompassed an exceptionally wide variety of types and professions. As well as the

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[34] Serle, Geoffrey, *The Golden Age A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851 - 1861,* MUP, Melbourne, 1963, p. 47.

[35] Broome, *Arriving*, p. 105.

[36] "So the colonists were thrown on their own resources, and though some of them tried desperately to recreate the old world, the environment in which they were cast and their isolation made the development of a new life inevitable." The children of nineteenth century Western District squatters "learnt of the Old World they had never seen … [Yet] they accepted the gifts of the new land without question, identified themselves with it and were to remember their birth-place with longing for the rest of their lives." Kiddle, Margaret, *Men of Yesterday, A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834 - 1890,* MUP, Melbourne, 1961, pp. 99-100.

traditional, popularly identified Western District squatter and tragic Highlander, there were considerable numbers who fell into neither category, or who came from Scotland in the capacity of one particular profession/occupation and finished up following a completely different path. Weston Bate's 'democratic mineral' yet again changed, once and for ever, the face of the old society - and the city of Ballarat was certainly one focal point for this 'reconstruction' or re-emergence of a society 'made over' in the manner of the old world - but on terms dictated by the new.

Scots in Ballarat

> We give the Scotch such unbounded credit for enterprise and the quality which their own word "canny" so well expresses, that we are not surprised to find a host of Scotchmen on whatever shore we may step, where money is to be made. Neither the snows of Canada nor the heats of India present any obstacles to them. This colony, before the gold discovery, was almost entirely Scotch. An immense majority of the squatters were Scotch, and remain so still. The principal merchants are Scotch: there is the same preponderance of the North Briton amongst the medical men and officers of the colony: and the publicans are almost entirely Scotch and Irish. On the diggings, Scotland has no lack of representatives; and they are everywhere, in all professions, careful, grasping, and thriving men, with a few exceptions.[37]

William Howitt, noted raconteur and observer of the Victorian diggings in the nineteenth century, is already, in 1854, introducing and confirming the character stereotype of the wealthy, pragmatic Scot - the steady, businesslike achiever.

Statistically, the Scottish in Ballarat tended to reflect a pattern of quiet achievement, and unremarkable habitation patterns.

They constituted the most numerically significant Celtic group after the Irish. A study of the Census for the years 1857 through to 1901 reveals (not surprisingly) a steadily diminishing number of those born in Scotland, and those practising the Scottish Presbyterian faith. Whilst it is difficult to read these figures accurately, since their gathering altered as methods became more sophisticated and settlements increased in size and complication, the picture which emerges is one of relative (although diminishing) stability and predictability.

In 1857, those born in Scotland totalled (according to the population count *by Warden's District*) 5735 people, of which approximately 3800 were men. This compares with a total of almost 5000 Irish, who, however, enjoyed a much more even male/female ratio (approximately 2700 men to 2100 women). In 1857, only one place in the colony had more Scottish residents, and that was Melbourne. In 1871, Scottish in Victoria numbered 56,210, or approximately 7.69% of the total population. This compares with the Irish at 100,468, or 13.73%, and the English, at 164,287, or 22.46%; hidden, of course, in this large "English' total are the Cornish.

In Ballarat, figures for the *Electoral Districts* in 1871 show Scottish-born in Ballarat (total of figures for Ballarat West and Ballarat East) as 4296; the largest number residing in Ballarat West was 3123, compared to a mere 1173 in the East. By this date, the ratio of males to females had almost evened out.

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[37] Howitt, William, *Land, Labour and Gold*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1972, Letter 13, p. 124.

Already, the Scottish had demonstrated a tendency to move westward, up onto the high ground of Sturt Street, and away from the floods and fires of the flat.

The figures for 1881 are difficult to compare, since the collection is indicated by either *City, Town and Borough, Goldfield*, or *Shire* - the *Electoral District* category seems to have been discarded.[38] I have taken the *Goldfield* and *City* totals. Scottish born on the Ballarat Goldfield totalled 3937, again with an almost even distribution of men and women. In the City, the total of Scottish born is almost 2000, with the division between East and West becoming even more marked: 1339 in the West, with only 654 in the East.

Irish figures show a similar imbalance between West and East, perhaps confirming the general trend away from the hitherto more populous and active 'flat', up to the newly prosperous and more stable 'West'.

By 1891, Scottish-born in the *City* had dropped quite substantially to only 1148, and the same trend is obvious in the *Electoral District* figures, where Scottish-born had fallen to 1717, with around 1300 of these in the West, and only 426 placed in the East. Figures for the Irish in this period show that in the broader *Electoral District* category, approximately 1500 Irish had gathered in Ballarat West, compared with only 752 in the East. More Scottish than Irish appeared to be moving to the West, if these proportions can be taken as accurate. In the *City*, the Irish maintained a larger presence than the Scottish, but the proportions do alter somewhat, with a higher proportion of Scottish choosing to live in the West (1148) rather than the East (520), as compared to

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[38] *Census of Victoria, 1851, 1854, 1857, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901*, *Statistics of the Colony,* printed annually in *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly.*

the Irish, 1356 of whom chose the West, with a more significant proportion - 932 - remaining in the East. Although it is not possible to build an argument totally on such figures, it is nonetheless reasonable to claim a trend away from Ballarat East, to Ballarat West, and to detect such a trend more strongly in the Scottish than in the Irish. These two national groups were closest together in overall numbers, and therefore most realistically comparable.

The development - indeed, the survival - of the city of Ballarat in the fifty years to Federation can be measured in terms of the sharp physical division between the East and the West. Weston Bate spends an entire chapter in *Lucky City* examining the development of the two distinct areas. He identifies the boom period for the West (in the ten years between 1861 and 1871), and contrasts this with the slowing down of growth in the East. The East was subject to difficult physical problems: floods and fires ripped through the township at almost regular intervals in the first ten years and the West therefore tended to attract the more affluent businessmen, who quickly perceived the greater physical stability of the West. The nature of mining on Ballarat had altered dramatically once the basalt was penetrated, and the search began for the quartz reefs in the West. As Bate points out, the energy needed to pursue the possibilities of the riches deep underground in the West came from the East; however, it came at a cost. The huge boom in the West meant that it became the fastest-growing municipality in Victoria in 1861. As the municipality of Ballarat developed, it was clear that the flood-prone plains of Ballarat East were inappropriate for the location of the buildings and institutions necessary in a newly-emerging metropolis, particularly one with such a grand future as Ballaratians were beginning to see for themselves. The development of Ballarat West acquired its own momentum, and the physical advantages of the area merely confirmed the inevitability of the West's superiority. As Bate has stated:

> There was much more than just a movement of miners. … the sites of the hospital, post-office, court-house, gaol, mechanics institute, benevolent asylum, and the major churches had naturally been located in the West.[39]

Present day scrutiny easily confirms the truth of Bate's analysis - the haphazard spontaneity of the growth in the East, reflected in the random nature of the layout of the streets, compared to the ordered and systematic precision of the surveyed West.

The West's physical proximity to the good grazing lands and pastoral properties of the Western district stimulated the increasing diversification of industries which grew up to support the graziers and farmers. The astute businessmen of the East were quick to perceive the direction events were taking, and followed the trend up from the flat, establishing themselves as the supporting framework of this long-term expansion. On the plateau could be found markets, flour mills, wholesalers, produce stalls, hotels, coachbuilders, agricultural implement producers, saleyards, slaughterers, tanners, fellmongers, soap and candle makers. Most importantly, a long-term future in mining emerged at a time when the alluvial richness of the East was diminishing. Quartz and company mining in the West produced a different society - one requiring long-term capital investment, and a determination to remain in order to reap the benefits of that investment. Homes, gardens, places of recreation, parks, 'beautiful Wendouree', a commitment to hearth and family - the men of the West had a different agenda from the "strident individualism"[40] of the bohemian East. Stability and consolidation became

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[39] Bate, *Lucky City* , Chapter 10: "East and West" p. 165 and *ff* .
[40] Bate, *Lucky City,* p. 184.

the catchcry, and the tumbledown, flood and fire-prone wooden haunts of Ballarat East could not meet these needs.

The development of the city of Ballarat into two distinct precincts was underwritten by the perception of the men who shaped that development.

Bate's "westerners" were those merchants, bankers, retailers, investors, and architects (to list but a few) who actively developed the already present assets of the West and confirmed the trend up from the flat, and into an era of expansion and progress the like of which Victoria had not seen before.

When the British author Anthony Trollope visited Ballarat in 1872, he was, so he said, amazed at the solidity and grandeur of this city - an achievement which he could hardly believe had been attained in so short a time:

> "Ballaarat is certainly a most remarkable town. It struck me with more surprise than any other city in Australia. … but that a town so well built, so well ordered, endowed with present advantages so great in the way of schools, hospitals, libraries, hotels, public gardens and the like, should have sprung up so quickly with no internal advantages of its own other than that of gold.
>
> As far as the eye went, I saw nothing but prosperity. … It has indeed every municipal luxury that can be named, including a public garden full of shrubs and flowers, and a lake of its own, - Lake Wendouree, - with a steamer and row-boats and regattas. It has a cricket-ground, and athletic games; and it has omnibuses and cabs, which by their cleanliness and general excellence make a Londoner blush."[41]

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[41] Trollope, Anthony, *Australia and New Zealand* Volume 1, 2nd Edition, 1873, reprinted 1968, Dawson's of Pall Mall, pp. 406-407, 409, 411.

Trollope's incredulity focussed on what appears to have been a new trend: the citizens of Ballarat had built a city, and, whatever ethnic differences there might have been, the overall uniting concept was one of commitment to Ballarat, rather than a single nationality.

At the time that Withers was writing his *History of Ballarat* (the first edition, in 1870), Ballarat could - to the surprise of social commentators - boast:

> over 40,000 inhabitants, 56 churches, 3 town halls, 477 hotels, many other large public edifices, over 10,000 dwellings, 84 miles of made streets, 164 miles of footpaths, 15 miles of pitched channelling, property of a rateable value of a quarter million sterling, and yielding a yearly municipal revenue of £50,000 … [the traveller to Ballarat] saw about him long reaching lines of stately buildings, and elegant shops, and large manufactories, including 11 banks, 8 iron foundries, 13 breweries and distilleries, 3 flour mills, and other manufactories, all within the town boundaries…[42]

Within this flourishing municipality could be found such organisations as the Mechanics Institute, the City Council, the Old Colonists' Association, the various churches, the Ballarat Orphan Asylum, the Ballarat Stock Exchange, the Fine Art Gallery, the Ballarat Turf Club, the Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society, the Public Library, the Academy of Music, the Horticultural Society, the various recreational clubs - cricket, bowls, coursing, football, the Ballarat Hunt Club, the rifle regiment and the Ballarat Rangers, the Fire Brigade, the Acclimatisation Society, and the various Celtic organisations - the Caledonian Society, the Cambrian Society, and the Hibernian Society.

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[42] Withers, *History of Ballarat*, pp. 240-241.

"A different class of men," says Bate, "being merchants and professional men"[43], and amongst this formidable group - these lords of the city - we find many Scottish merchants, graziers, industrialists, and solicitors who were conspicuous for the manner in which they took on this mantle of community and municipal benevolence which so defined the city, and so mystified and impressed visitors.

Withers' pride and Trollope's wonderment at Ballarat's development has some basis in fact. The Victorian gold rushes had certainly given rise to a "remarkable degree of social equality"[44], and Serle claims for Victoria "an almost unique case of masses of migrants over a short period swamping a small existing society."[45] He points out that this society (naming Ballarat, Bendigo and Castlemaine- Chewton alongside Melbourne) created "a new, large, self-governing county, automatically re-creating British institutions and reforming clubs and societies."[46] Serle further claims that "for the rest of the century the vigour of the cultural life of Ballarat and Bendigo provided striking evidence of the quality of migrants who had settled in the gold-towns."[47]

Bate points out that Ballarat's economic position was also a dominating one. The market for livestock sales was the strongest outside Melbourne, because Ballarat was the centre of Victoria's main stock-producing district.[48] Ballarat's regional importance was further demonstrated by the strength of the Pastoral and Agricultural Society. The main Western District sheep show was moved

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[43] Bate, *Lucky City* p. 181.
[44] Serle, *The Golden Age*, p. 375.
[45] Ibid. p. 381.
[46] Ibid. p. 381.
[47] Ibid. p. 371.
[48] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 119. 28,978 cattle and 541,416 sheep went through the Ballarat market - about half Melbourne's figure.

from Skipton to Ballarat in 1874.[49] Ballarat's geographical isolation in the early decades of the gold rush actually worked in favour of the development of local industries like foundries and processing plants which were 'on the spot' and therefore able to supply the needs of the burgeoning Ballarat economy. The *Argus* in February 1861 commented that nearly all the machinery for Ballarat's current quartz boom, including the engines, had been made on the field and was equal to anything imported from the other country.[50]

An examination of those citizens who claimed Scottish birth in Ballarat reveals particular tendencies which certainly distinguish the contribution of this group of men to the creation and particular development of the city. Most of them arrived in Ballarat as a response to the promised wealth in the new world. Some came with families, as small boys, and so had little say in the direction which their lives would take, whilst others, already fending for themselves, made a clear decision to emigrate, usually travelling as unassisted immigrants. The economic situation of most of those who came to be leading citizens was not critical. The move to emigrate was seen more as a means of bettering themselves and their situation, rather than a response to a totally desperate predicament; in situations where the emigrants had travelled on their own, as adults, it is notable how often they left comfortable or assured futures, family businesses, or potential careers, to travel across the seas to a new and unknown world. There is an element of restlessness detectable in many of the available Scottish biographical accounts which might explain their readiness to move away from the known, from the society which might have seemed restrictive, lacking in adventure, or monetary remuneration, towards the glamour, excitement and challenge of a life in the colonies.

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[49] Ibid. p. 119.
[50] *Argus*,5 February, 1861, quoted in Bate, *Lucky City*,, p. 125.

There, if all that was said was true, wealth was to be had far more easily, the intellectual and social climate was unfettered, and the fable of a 'new world' might possibly be true. Many of them seemed to be men of ordinary background, whose greatest quality was a readiness, spurred on by difficult conditions in Scotland, to move away from 'home'. Is this the mark of the emigrant? Not that the Scottish of Ballarat left Scotland as towering figures, but that many of them left of their own free will, to seek independent lives. This freedom to seek a new, less restrictive life is highlighted in the words of emigrant William Calder, who left Edinburgh for Australia in May 1858; Calder was anxious to leave the old world behind:

> When I left Edinburgh … I put on the resolution of leaving all caste behind, and putting my hand to anything. I was aware that we were going to a country where everything like stiffness or "starch" would be looked upon with the greatest contempt.[51]

Calder actually articulated the reasons why he left Scotland, and also expressed his hopes for a new life for his children:

> … it will be an unspeakable gain to them to have left the old country …with its overstocked population and every avenue to advancement choked by a crowd of eager aspirants.[52]

Those Scottish emigrants whom it is possible to trace in Ballarat did not appear to have left their mark in a way which would ensure their presence on Ballarat's historical slate; however, their sheer unremarkableness - their

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[51] Quoted in Richards, Eric, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora" in *Stories of Australian Migration*, ed. John Hardy, 1988, p. 47.
[52] Quoted in Richards, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora", p. 49.

unassuming, quiet affluence - placed what Eric Richards has called an "almost indelible though fading mark on the making of the Australian people".[53]

The goldfields environment challenged the Scottish identity in a particular way: to keep faith with their determination to succeed it was necessary, so it seemed, to establish and consolidate their positions in the new society, often at the expense of the marked expression of their nationality.

Cliff Cumming, writing about "The Celtic Presence of the Scots in Port Phillip"[54] in the pre-gold era, in fact is quite clear that those Scottish contemplating emigration in this period were very uncertain of the security of their identity, and experienced great fear of the "vastness of the bush and the sparseness of the population", and their ability to maintain their national identity in the face of it. Cumming disputes the assimilation theories of Prentis, Broome, and Richards, and argues that the Scots in early Port Phillip were able to settle so comfortably in Victoria *because* they came to be confident of their nationality in this foreign climate:

> Rather, their willingness to be reconciled and to settle in their new environment depended upon their confident assurance of being able to continue to maintain their own identity outside Scotland itself.[55]

Cumming argues that the Scottish were able to do this because they developed an extremely strong sense of what being Scottish entailed:

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[53] Richards, "Australia and the Scottish Diaspora", p. 47.
[54] Cumming, Cliff, "The Celtic Presence: Scots in Port Phillip 1838-1851", in *Australian Celtic Journal*, Volume 3, 1990-1991, p. 14.
[55] Cumming, "Scots in Port Phillip", 1990, pp. 14-15.

> It is not our hills and glens alone that make Scotland. It is our Kirk, or Schools, the hamely Scottish tongue, the bonspiel, the market, in short all our Scottish ways.[56]

In effect, it is argued, the recreation of a strongly 'Scottish' environment in early Victoria, with special emphasis on the provision of a powerful Kirk, enabled the Scottish to retain a sense of Scottishness. The question, then, which must be asked and answered is how the Scottish in gold rush Ballarat retained "all their Scottish ways", and yet assimilated so successfully, and diminished, or even 'faded', by the end of the century. The remainder of this chapter will examine the presence of the Scottish in Ballarat, according to the maintenance of "all their Scottish ways", and offer an explanation for the narrow, initial retention of their first identity, and the accompanying, almost inevitable shedding of this in the face of the achievement of 'becoming Australian'.

Careful scrutiny of known biographical sources reveals that the Scottish emigrants who came to Ballarat and the surrounding pastoral districts in the latter half of the nineteenth century came from solid lower middle-class or middle-class families; whilst not generally wealthy, they seemed able in most cases to set their children up with a modest level of education, or at least with some kind of work skills in the form of an apprenticeship or a place in the family business.

The Scottish emigrants to Ballarat predominantly disembarked at Melbourne and travelled, as best they might, to the diggings. Ballarat was not always the chosen destination, but the fame of the golden city had spread far and wide, and even those who did not start in Ballarat often ended up there. It is

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[56] Cumming, "Scots in Port Phillip", 1990, p. 15.

absorbing to read the accounts of the lives of these men, and to see the way in which they expanded into the freedom and opportunity which the 'democratic metal' permitted.

Names which are now quite familiar in Ballarat began from the most modest of origins, and provide examples of the small, successful Scot who came to Ballarat. Unfortunately, direct statistical evidence which relates occupations to the different nationalities in Ballarat is presently non-existent. However, by searching the directories, and early surveys of the city, it is still possible to gain a picture of the role which the men of Scotland played in the establishment of Ballarat in the fifty years after gold. A brief survey of the nature of the employment of Scots in Ballarat in the later nineteenth century does reveal a broad range of occupations, but with a significant emphasis on those who were engaged as *merchants*, that is, chaff merchants, grocers, timber merchants, machinery merchants, horse merchants, tailors and clothiers, nurserymen, and real estate agents. This list possesses by far the longest and most diverse range; other categories include those engaged in the *building* trade, that is, surveyors, builders, designers, carpenters, and monumental sculptors. Those working as founders, iron workers, quarrymen and miners constituted the *mining* and *heavy manufacturing* industries, whilst *professional occupations* were represented by Scottish doctors, dentists, clerks and chemists. *Industry owners* such as newspaper men, brewers and a coachline owner and contractor followed, with men of the cloth also rating a mention. Across the whole range of Scottish occupations came mention of Justices of the Peace, city councillors, 'city fathers', and several vague 'entrepreneurs'.

In these early Ballarat reviews[57] of those men who were perceived as 'making their mark ' on the golden city, certain key areas, therefore, identify themselves as particularly Scottish. The Scots of Ballarat tended to be merchants, foundry men, bankers, investors, pastoralists, and mine or business managers. Many were successful to the point where they were identified in notable (and historically invaluable) publications detailing the achievers of both Ballarat and Victoria. This success was translated into the appearance of a group of benevolent 'city fathers', who saw it as part of their legacy to the city of their adoption to involve themselves in all aspects of community life. This meant serving on the committees of (for example) the Benevolent Asylum, the Hospital, the orphanage, the Mechanics Institute, and the Horticultural Society. Importantly, these men were not only successful, but they (and the money they made) stayed on, or returned to Ballarat in the latter half of the century, and endowed the city with something of their material or spiritual wealth.

James Bickett, printer, of Girvan, Scotland, came to Melbourne in 1848, and worked as a gardener. For six years he travelled around New South Wales and Victoria, dabbling in trading and mining, until he finally settled in the Buninyong region. With marriage in 1856 respectability and stability suddenly seemed to arrive; positions of significance and influence in the community followed - amongst them, Chairman of the Mining Board, (he presented an address to HRH Prince Alfred on his visit to Ballarat in 1867), legal manager of many Ballarat mines, and a moving spirit behind the establishment of the School of Mines, a leading Ballarat educational

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[57] See Kimberly, W.B. (ed.), *Ballarat and Vicinity,* F.W.Niven, Ballarat, 1894; Sutherland, Whitworth, et al contributors*, Victoria and its Metropolis,* McCarron, Bird, and Co., Melbourne, 1888; and Smith, James, (ed.), *Cyclopaedia of Victoria, An Historical and Commercial Review*, *An Epitome of Progress*, The Cyclopaedia Company, Melbourne, and F. W. Niven and Co., Melbourne and Ballarat, 1904.

institution. At the end of the century, Bickett had been appointed a Justice of the Peace, had been twice President of the Mechanics Institute, was a member of the Old Colonists' Club, a member of the Royal Arch Lodge, and worked tirelessly for the erection of the statues of his famed countryman, Robert Burns, and the Irish poet Tom Moore. Bickett, consummate community man, by his actions clearly saw the importance of extending his nationalistic largesse to include both Scottish and Irish statues; the beautification of Ballarat assumed more importance than loyalty to a particular national group.

Thomas Stoddart was born in Roxburgh, Scotland, in 1828, and worked as a joiner apprentice and carriage maker until 1853 when he decided to emigrate to Australia. After working in Melbourne for twelve months, he arrived in Ballarat to dig for gold. By 1861 he had turned from miner to speculator, and thence to sharebroker; by the end of the century he was the oldest sharebroker on the Ballarat Stock Exchange. Stoddart was the moving spirit behind the building of the Stock Exchange, and it was said that he floated more companies than anyone else in Ballarat. He was director of many mining companies including the *Sir Henry Loch* and *Plateau No. 1*, and was a director of the Ballarat Trustees Company. Stoddart is remembered above all for his philanthropic and munificent adornment of the City of Ballarat with a particularly fine collection of statues. On an overseas trip, Stoddart visited Italy, and whilst there became inspired with the idea of purchasing a series of statues in fine Carrara marble, and presenting these to the City of Ballarat. This he duly did, and, building on this precedent, his friend, fellow Scot James Russell Thompson followed suit, and, as already discussed, empowered Stoddart as trustee and executor of his estate, to spend over £3000 on a similar bequest to the city. Stoddart was Chairman of the Committee which put the Burns statue in Sturt Street, as well as one of the chief contributors to the fund. He was also broadminded enough to perform the

same services towards the erection of the statue of the Irish poet Thomas Moore. Stoddart was a Justice of the Peace, vice-president of the Fine Art Gallery Committee, and a member of the Old Colonists' Club, the Commercial Club, and the Ballarat Club. As a tribute to his immense and significant contribution to the city of his adoption, a bust of Stoddart was placed in the City Hall.

Stoddart's commitment to the beautification of Ballarat is, again, at least as significant as the manner in which he chose to carry out this beautification. As a group, the Burns Memorial Committee demonstrated a particularly enlightened attitude: at the unveiling, many nationalistic sentiments were expressed, and much lauding of the greatness of the Scottish poet, but there was also an important expression of the fact that Ballarat residents were not so much interested in expressing parochial loyalty, as seeking the universality of Burn's message:

> It was thought that they were trying to introduce national peculiarities and national bigotry into the city, but he was glad to see Mr. Brophy present, and other gentlemen representing England and Wales (Applause). The erecting of the statue would prove of immense educating value to Ballarat and the colony generally. The effect of such a work of art would be a refining influence. It would stimulate the artistic feelings and develop hidden talents among our boys and girls, which, but for the presence of such a delicate work of art, would never have been touched.[58]

The *Courier* went on to praise the effect which the presence of such a statue would have on the glorification of the working man in Ballarat, especially of "the struggles of an honest man against snobbery and hypocrisy". "It was painful", said the *Courier*, " to see public men hankering after titles." Such

was not a consideration in the young and democratic country of Australia, where titles were out of place. Burns' importance reached across national boundaries:

> They should not let it be forgotten that Burns was not merely a Scotchman. If he were only a Scotchman it would not be right for them to honour him so. Burns was a man, and he spoke not to Scotchmen only, but to humanity.[59]

The Hon. Mr. Nimmo, who continued the self-congratulatory tone of the proceedings, praised Ballarat for its vision in erecting the statue, and for continuing to place itself in the forefront of "all kinds of reformation, political

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[58] *Ballarat Courier,* 22 April, 1887.
[59] *Ballarat Courier*, 22 April, 1887.

or social". Stoddart himself had the final word on the de-Scottishing of the whole event when he concluded the festivities with a call for the erection by the English and Irish of statues of Shakespeare and Moore. He believed that

The Scots, more than any other of the Celtic groups in Ballarat, were the builders - the men who left their mark. In houses, churches, statues, gardens, and institutions, the Scots of Ballarat figured largely, and the historian can measure their success in the material culture which they left behind. Yet many of those Scotsmen who emigrated - those from the peasant classes of the Highlands, and the labouring classes of the Scottish Lowlands - left no physical mark, and can be identified only as names on shipping lists. What of their contribution? More often than not, such a presence can only be measured by the strength of the spiritual assemblies of the nationality in question. For each Celtic group, the pattern of their devoutness can testify to the power of their existence on Ballarat, and the Scots were no exception.

Donnachie accepts as much when he traces the derivation of Scottish success to the "three great manifestations of Scottishness overseas": education, culture and the Kirk.[60] Most historians are agreed that the single most dominating force in Scottish society at home or abroad was Presbyterianism, and it is via the demonstration of this religious force in Ballarat that we can obtain a deeper and more meaningful idea of their overall contribution to the making of Ballarat society.

Religion

Although one must be careful not to automatically assume *Scottish* for *Presbyterian*, it is certainly true to say that in the Census of Victoria figures 1857 - 1901, there is a very specific 'Scottish' category for the religious statistics:

> SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANS: Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland, United Presbyterian Church, Other Scottish Presbyterians, and Presbyterians (not otherwise defined)[61]

Interestingly, within the Ballarat *Municipality*, the number of people practising the Presbyterian faith and those practising the Roman Catholic faith were almost exactly the same. However, once the religion figures are scrutinised outside the central area, that is, taking into account the various diggings areas, the ratio changes. In 1857, Weston Bate identifies the proportion of Presbyterians in Ballarat West as 14.89%, compared with a Roman Catholic

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[60] Donnachie, "The Making of 'Scots on the Make'", Scottish Settlement and Enterprise in Australia, 1830 - 1900", p.141, in Devine, T.M., *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society, Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar, University of Strathclyde, 1990 - 1991,* John Donald Publishers, Ltd., Edinburgh, 1992.

percentage of 12.15%; in Ballarat East, that Presbyterian figure only alters a little, increasing to 15.47%, whilst, interestingly, the Roman Catholic percentage increases quite noticeably to 16%. Bate's figures define the trend for the Presbyterians in Ballarat: in 1861, nearly 5% more Presbyterians lived in Ballarat West than in the East; in 1871 the figures had evened out a little, but were still in favour of the West (16% to 13.3%). In 1881, the gap had extended again, being still around 16% in the West, but down to 12% in the East. A virtually unchanged ratio existed in 1891, as it did in 1901. The percentages of Presbyterians in Sebastopol remained fairly stable, beginning with around 12.5% in 1871, and then dropping to around 8.5% in 1881, where it hovered for the rest of the century.

Nowhere is the manifestation of 'Scottishness' in Ballarat more apparent than in the early and prolific spread of Presbyterianism.

Table 4*

Presbyterianism in Ballarat, 1857 - 1901						
Denomination	**Percentage (%)**					
	1857	**1861**	**1871**	**1881**	**1891**	**1901**
Church of England	43.57	35.00	26.65	27.19	26.15	25.93
Presbyterian	14.89	15.63	13.86	12.25	11.84	11.91
Methodist	15.55	17.50	21.98	23.90	27.11	20.98

[61] Census of Victoria, 1857 and ff, "Religion of the People", p. 152.

Roman Catholic	12.15	14.40	19.29	20.15	18.90	16.44

* Information taken from Census of Victoria, Bate Collection, Ballarat Library.

Despite the relatively small percentage of the total population which constituted the Presbyterians - always the lowest amongst the four main denominations - the religion received almost instant attention, and concomitant success. Driven by the typically Scottish concern to ameliorate at the earliest possible stage the licentiousness and godlessness of the diggings, the first Scots on Ballarat set to with enthusiasm to transplant their Church to the new land. Cumming clearly described the immutable links between Scottish emigrants and their religion, and demonstrated the need felt by these people to reaffirm the Scottishness of their existence via the introduction of their religion. According to Cumming, the Home Church in Scotland deliberately sent its emigrating population out into the world armed with the belief that a 'covenant with God' was all that was necessary to maintain Scottishness:

> You cannot go where God is not … Though you go forth to a distant, it is not to a strange country. The God of your fathers will go before you.[62]

Cumming pointed out that the uncertainty and fear felt by Scottish emigrants travelling to this 'strange country' could be allayed if they travelled in the sure and certain knowledge that their Presbyterian God went with them:

> … but give them their church, their minister, and their school, and they become, after a time, quite reconciled to the land of their adoption.[63]

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[62] Cumming, Cliff,"The Celtic Presence: Scots in Port Phillip 1838 - 1851", quoting *Home and Foreign Ministry Record for the Church of Scotland,* March, 1839, p. 169.
[63] Cumming, p 14, quoting Letter from unnamed correspondent in the *Scottish Missionary and Philanthropic Register,* October, 1836, pp. 383 - 384.

The fierce determination with which the men of Scotland established their 'Kirk' in Ballarat testifies to this self conscious desire to both shape the face of the new society, and reaffirm the faith of their fathers. The raising up of a church assuaged much of that restless spirit which had motivated emigration in the first place, and the needs of the raw society of the goldfields answered a profound need in the founders of the Ballarat kirks.

Scotsmen like Baird, Henderson, Ramsay, Murray, Stoddart, Cairns, Wanliss, and Hastie responded magnificently to the call from both the church authorities, and the men on the diggings themselves, for a ministry on the diggings. Congregations developed early: even before gold was discovered, the Rev. Thomas Hastie was answering J.D Lang's call for ministers to work in New South Wales and Van Diemen's land. Arriving in Australia in 1842, Hastie proceeded immediately to Launceston, and from there moved to country Victoria, where Presbyterian communities were crying out for a minister.

After a visit to Western Victoria, Hastie (with his wife) chose the Buninyong area as his ministry, helped in his choice by the support and economic encouragement of pastoralists Learmonth and Russell. Hastie's work in this area, supported financially and emotionally by the Scottish pastoralists and townspeople of the district, has become quite famous. His energy, pioneer vision, and staunch Presbyterianism, coupled with his ability to steer a safe course through the dangerous waters of Scottish Presbyterian squabbling, spoke clearly of a man in the right place at the right time. His work in establishing the Boarding School at Buninyong was a brilliantly practical realisation of Thomas Learmonth's vision of a school which would be capable

of providing an education for all manner of pupils from the humblest shepherd's children to the eldest son of the squatter.

Hastie's ministry, in its early years, stretched over an enormous distance, and it was Hastie who addressed the first Presbyterian gatherings on Ballarat. Withers records the local preacher, Mr. J. Sanderson, preaching "on the flat" to about one hundred diggers on Sunday 28 September 1851; his text, no doubt chosen with goldfields materialism in mind, was Corinthians 2, "Ye are bought with a price". The Rev. Hastie arrived, and overhearing the singing, requested their assistance at his own service at the Commissioner's Camp.[64] Along with many of the more observant visitors who came early to the diggings, Hastie was concerned about the socially disorganising effect of gold:

> Society, for a time, seemed to lose its ordinary conditions; those at the bottom rose to the top, and those at the top fell to the bottom; but it says much for the intelligence and character of the diggers and others that this state of things was so speedily righted and that authority and law so soon resumed their place.[65]

The importance of Hastie's contribution to Ballarat, and indeed Victorian, religious and educational progress should not be underestimated. What is the more significant is that this contribution was matched by other Scotsmen who also came to the Ballarat area and made a dramatic impact on the society which developed there.

The Reverend Henderson's story is equally interesting. Again, a man for the times, Henderson came to Ballarat in response to the 'call' from the local congregation, and was inducted in February 1858. He was born in Dalpatrick,

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[64] Withers, *History of Ballarat* , p. 60.
[65] Withers, *History of Ballarat,* p. 40.

Scotland, and studied at the University of Glasgow, and Hanover, in Germany. He was first called to service at Williamstown, but early accounts do not rate his ministry there as entirely successful. It was suggested by C. Stuart Ross in *The Scottish Church in Victoria* that this was so because Henderson did not fit into the social *milieu* of the more settled and conservative Melbourne suburb.[66] Ballarat was Henderson's *metier,* and seemed to engage and develop all the best qualities which he had to offer. Something in the brash, reckless and raw society which constituted Ballarat in those early years was answered by his 'fervid nature', and his individual, assertive and compassionate temperament. Henderson's straightforward rhetoric, and his penchant for 'speaking out' on all matters theological, coupled with his directness and ability to communicate at a most basic level with the broadest spectrum of humanity on the goldfields, enabled him to make an enormous and most favourable impact on not only his congregation, but Ballarat society in general.

A centenary account of the history of St. Andrew's Kirk[67] gives a somewhat overstated, but nonetheless vivid description of Henderson's service of Induction, conducted by the Presbytery of Geelong:

> Seated in front about the open Bible, were ministers and elders from other parts of the Presbytery, among whom was that grand pioneer, Thomas Hastie, who gave the address. In the body of the hall was a reverent congregation of Presbyterian nation-builders, showing their respect for the solemnity of the occasion with stiff collar and sober black coat, black lace and bonnet, bustles, and furbelows. Horses tethered to hitching posts outside testified to rough roads and distant travel. Standing to answer questions put to him by the Moderator.

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[66] Stuart Ross, C., *The Scottish Church in Victoria, 1851 - 1901,* Hutchinson, Melbourne, 1901, p. 129.

[67] *The Way We Have Come The Story of the First Century of the Life of St. Andrew's Kirk, Ballaarat, 1855- 1955*; author unknown. Held in the Ormond College Theological Library, Melbourne.

> William Henderson, tall and broad shouldered, clad in black Genevan gown, with white bands running up to a bearded face on which lines of thought and action blended, the whole capped with gentle waves of hair, gave an impression of solid strength sufficient to inspire a new congregation with confidence.[68]

Confidence was certainly what was required on the goldfields in those days. In the search for order, moral integrity and the ability to physically realise a religious presence was imperative. Henderson's strength, vision, and compelling leadership provided the necessary impetus for the construction of two significant Presbyterian church buildings on Ballarat: first the wooden structure which housed the newly-born congregation of the Ballarat Presbyterian Church,[69] which was opened for worship on the first Sunday of May, 1858, and closely following this, the laying of the foundation stone of the present St. Andrew's Kirk on 1 December 1862.

This latter building was to symbolise Henderson's important contribution to Presbyterianism on Ballarat: its construction followed his career, and even mirrored his achievements. Henderson's intelligence sometimes carried him far from the golden gullies and humble folk of his Ballarat ministry. He was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in 1872- 3, and represented Victoria at the Pan-Presbyterian Council in Edinburgh in 1877. His intellect was prodigious: he was recognised as one of Ballarat's best-known lecturers, and published many of his sermons and addresses. His most notable works were *Christianity and Modern Thought* (1861), a series of lectures on Christian apologetics, and *If, and What? Twelve Lectures on the Foundation of Christian*

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[68] *The Way We Have Come,* p. 4.

[69] Born of the Union between the Synod of Victoria with the Free Church and with some congregations from the United Presbyterian Church. On the consummation of the Union on April 7th, 1859, this congregation was incorporated within it.

Theism (1882). He edited the *Presbyterian Review* in 1878 - 80.[70] He was capable of encompassing such disparate issues as European politics and Darwinian evolution, and yet, even whilst engaged with such lofty matters, he was able to maintain a vigorous community presence amongst his Ballarat congregation. He held a captain's commission in, and was chaplain to, the Ballaarat Volunteer Rangers, and was founder of one of Ballarat's foremost educational institutions, Ballarat College, where he is remembered by past student Robert Ball (who attended the College 1869-70) as

> a grand man, with a personality that diffused culture and benevolence. I fancy I can still see him with my mind's eye, striding up Sturt Street - a tall noticeable man with fine head, and the cast of countenance that culture and the literary temperament so often stamps on its votaries. We boys liked him and believed in him.[71]

As Henderson's life in Ballarat advanced, his Kirk progressed apace. In 1873 came the porch and vestry, in 1882 the tower and the spire reaching to 137 feet above the ground, in 1883 the carved rosette decorations at the front entrance until, as workmen laboured on the erection of the spire in July 1884, word came of the death of their leader and beloved minister. As a mark of respect, the builders inserted black mourning bands of basaltic rock on the four pinnacles at the base of the spire. St. Andrew's Kirk was finally completed in 1926, when the choir vestry was added. The whole building is an affirmation in stone to the vision and hard work of William Henderson, and other leaders of his ilk, who shaped and moulded the rough, tentative and vulnerable Presbyterians of early Ballarat into a vigorous and successful congregation. The committee which initiated the fifty year history of the 'auld kirk' (1856 -

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[70] *Australian Dictionary of Biography 1851 - 1890*, pp. 377 - 378.
[71] Mein, W. Gordon, *History of Ballarat College 1864 - 1964*; printed 1964, authorised by Ballarat College Council, pp. 5 - 6.

1906) identified the debt which it believed was owed to these resolute and formidable pioneers:

> the trials and successes, the failures and ever upward aspirations of the days when to set the Church on the sure foundation of the present time, in the midst of the young and then unsettled community, meant the exercise of strong faith, much self-denial, and indomitable perseverance.[72]

It was hoped by the stalwarts of the early twentieth century that younger generations would achieve some understanding and appreciation of the dedication of these ecclesiastical pathfinders - these "sturdy fathers, and … revered mothers"[73] - the "many Scotchmen" who "amongst the heterogenous gathering of men who … came hither to make their fortunes" and brought with them the old religion of their forefathers. Scottish desire for some form of public worship was matched by Scottish determination to realise this need, for "With the Scottish folk to desire was generally to attain."[74] Like most 'God-fearing' folk of the mining community, the Scottish population of Ballarat was quickly sensitive to the lawlessness and disorder of the diggings:

> I will not attempt to describe my first impressions of the Ballarat goldfields in 1855 and 1856, but at that time it was estimated there was from thirty to forty thousand men at work on the field, no doubt it was the most busy place I have ever seen, and everywhere the eye looked white tents both large and small were scattered about without any attempt at order. There was a constant ring of buckets and tubs and cradles working at every water hole, here and there a red flag marked a store or grog shanty and after sunset a constant discharge of firearms of every Clan. The practice being to reload with fresh powder before retiring to sleep - who could fortell [sic] that a City like Ballarat today

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[72] *Jubilee Souvenir of St. Andrew's Kirk , A Short History of the origins of St. Andrew's Kirk Ballarat 1856 - 1906,* no date, no author; p.13.
[73] *Jubilee Souvenir of St. Andrew's Kirk, … Ballarat, 1856 - 1906,* p. 13.
[74] *Jubilee Souvenir of St. Andrew's Kirk,* p. 1.

> would ever replace the tents and shanties of the early fifties and the sounds of the cradles would so soon give place to the hum of the electric trams and motor cars.[75]

The impressions of the Rev. R. Hamilton (agent of the United Presbyterian Church) as he travelled throughout the Victorian diggings epitomise the situation which confronted men of the Church as they tried to anticipate the needs of the seething, disparate rabble which cried for order even as it created more and more disorder:

> The scene presenting itself on the way to the mines was novel and striking, and presented anything but a favourable aspect of the moral and spiritual character of the strange community. For miles before reaching the centre of interest it could not have been known that it was the Lord's Day. …[at Golden Point] … the aspect to an observer at a distance was exceedingly striking. Here already, within a very few weeks of the discovery, were thousands and tens of thousands of calico tents and bark huts, each owned by a party or small company of united miners, the whole forming a town of no small dimensions. The congregated crowds reminded one of a gigantic bee-hive, or an immense mound of lively and industrious ants. Here the swarming multitudes were settled for the time as if by magic, in the midst of an extensive primeval forest.[76]

And for the man of God, silently contemplating this spiritually bereft undignified scramble for the glittering prizes hidden beneath the clays of Ballarat, the great and pressing question was how to gain the ear of these apparently heedless miners, how to dispel this "fearful spell under which men are influenced by the hunger and thirst for gold."[77]

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[75] "Memorandum of the family of John McLeish who left Scotland in the year 1854", Sovereign Hill Research Files, typescript, p. 5.
[76] Hamilton, Robert, *A Jubilee History of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria*, Hutchinson, Melbourne 1888, Appendix A, p. iii.

Like the Cornish Wesleyans, the Scottish Presbyterians soon felt the need for some kind of imposition of order. Almost the earliest representatives of all denominations on the diggings were the Presbyterians, and despite the apparent lawlessness of the situation, if contemporary accounts are to be believed, then these men must have been gratifyingly aware that for many, at least, their presence was enormously important:

> The Free Church is as near as twenty yards to our house, and there's service in it twice day on Sabbath; but they are not like the ministers comparing to those we have left behind us; but who came here about a fortnight ago, but the Reverend Norman MacLeod, from America; he is very old now, he is just like old Norman MacLeod in your own place. He seems to be a very good man. There is a Galick [sic] sermon preached every Sabbath once a day here, so that the place is not so bad off as what we heard of before we left home, for the want of the means of grace, if a person wishes to attend them; but this is a very wicked place, and people given greatly to drink here, especially women. I never saw a town yet where there is more women given to drink than this town is.[78]

Such sentiments are reminiscent of the abhorrence expressed by many of the more God-fearing men and women on the diggings. Fear of lawlessness, and horror at the naked seaminess of many aspects of goldfields life, motivated such responses, and was particularly apparent in the responses of the victims of the Highland Clearances who were often battling language difficulties as well as other more general disadvantages.

Although numerically the smallest (of the four main) practising religions on the goldfields, Presbyterianism flourished in Ballarat in the first fifty years of the city's existence. Evidence points to flourishing congregations at many of

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[77] Hamilton, *A Jubilee History,* Appendix A, p. iv .
[78] *Letters from Highland Emigrants in Australia, dated between September and December 1852*, p. 13,

the newly established churches, and an impressive building programme which included the notable St. Andrew's Kirk, amongst many other significant structures. As the population of Ballarat grew and the nature of the town developed from a mining town with a shifting populace to a more settled community, congregations stayed ever more confidently with those strong and stalwart leaders who had taken them through the early uncertain years. The congregation at St. Andrew's Kirk maintained a consistent attendance at communion service for the years 1861 - 1888 of approximately one hundred and forty four faithful souls. This consistency is reflected in the overall figures for Presbyterianism in Ballarat, which did not seem to be subject to the same wild fluctuations which other documented religions experienced.[79] Small relative to the other established religions, the Scottish Presbyterians nonetheless remained steadfast to the religion of their ancestors.

The Scots in Ballarat were certainly not a homogenous group. However, as Cumming has pointed out, the diversity within Scottish migration to Australia - Highland Scots, Lowland Scots, urban and rural Scots, Conservative, Liberal or Radical Scots, as well as some striking religious diversity was ultimately overruled by the overriding sense of 'being Scottish', this very real sense of being a part of a distinctive and significant national group.[80] The national kinship felt by all those Scots who emigrated to Ballarat was stronger than the sectarian and culturally divisive baggage which had travelled across the ocean with them, and the strength and uncompromising resolution with which their religion was so quickly established was very

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Letter from Margaret MacLeod, from Dunvegan, Isle of Skye.

[79] The largest vacillation within the documented Presbyterian numbers was approximately 3.6%. This was in 1861 and 1901. The Methodists experienced their widest swing - 11.5% - between 1857 and 1891, whilst the Roman Catholics experienced a swing of 8% between 1857 and 1891; Anglican figures were the most dramatic - a swing of 17.5% between 1857 and 1901.

[80] Cumming, "Scots in Port Phillip", p. 18.

much a part of the 'cement' which held together the Scots of Ballarat, and enabled them to largely continue in "all their Scottish ways."

Games and Poets - Scottish or Australian?

Traditional manifestations of national identity have always been especially apparent in the establishment of national associations. The Scots, even before the Irish in Ballarat, were quick to form a Caledonian Society, (November 1858), and New Year's Day Caledonian Sports featured prominently on the Ballarat social calendar for many years. Withers records the first sports day on 1 January 1859, on what later became the Eastern Oval. Mr. Hugh Gray presided over the event, and was clearly a popular Scottish identity in Ballarat: the *Ballarat Star* remembered him fondly in his shepherd's plaid costume, officiating with untiring energy at the annual gatherings - a "devoted lover of 'Caledonia stern and wild'."[81]

It seemed that the small village of Buninyong actually pre-empted the Ballarat Caledonian Society's first outdoor sports day when the Buninyong Highland Society held some Highland Games on 1 January 1858. The *Star* reported that the actual 'Highland' nature of the gathering was not particularly notable, with apparently only one gentleman dressed in Highland costume - and the *Star* was suspicious of the authenticity of this gentleman:

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[81] *Ballarat Star*, 3 June, 1880, Obituary. Gray, in a sense, epitomised the quintessential Ballarat Scot. He arrived in Ballarat in 1853, and set up business as a blacksmith, but pursued all kinds of wider interests, particularly in the fields of chemistry, mechanics, iron working, and inventions. He was a pioneer promoter of the Mechanics Institute, and founding President, and long time member and supporter of the Ballarat Caledonian Society.

> we only observed one individual in the garb of "Old Gaul", and he by no means of the appearance of one who had footed it on the heather of the Scottish hills.[82]

The organisation of the day was also not, in the *Star's* opinion, as good as it might have been, but commentators seemed prepared to overlook any such detractions, given that this was the first of such events ever held in the district. Proceedings were initiated by a lone piper, whose presence was otherwise not much in evidence throughout the day, and then, poor organisation notwithstanding, the usual traditional events proceeded to take place.

Elements of Scottishness such as Caledonian Games, in Ballarat at least, were remarkable as much for their ecumenicalism, as for their pure Scottishness. Throughout the century, the documented thousands who attended these occasions were treated to a wide variety of events which supposedly came under the broad aegis of 'Caledonian'; in this so-called category we find Irish Jigs, Basket and Potato Races, and Cumberland Wrestling, performed on at least one occasion under the Scottish, Irish and English flags, together. In truth, it would seem that the 'Caledonian' imprint was merely a useful excuse for Ballaratians of all persuasions to celebrate a traditional Scottish occasion (New Year) in an Australian outdoors context.[83] The conviction with which the Games were celebrated waned somewhat as the century progressed, and an article in the *Star* in July, 1880 noted the diminution when it commented on

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[82] *Ballarat Star,* 13th January 1858.

[83] Richard Broome, in *The Victorians Arriving*, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Assoc., McMahon's Point, NSW, 1984, p. 105, points out that even the Scottish games became the preserve of the whole Victorian town, rather than just the Scottish community. Certainly, the Ballarat press reports the Caledonian Games in terms of the participation and enjoyment of the whole community, not just the Scottish community. The Scots were, of course, conspicuously present, but more and more as 'figureheads' or mascots. The sports seemed to gather a momentum of their own.

the demolition of the old Caledonian Society's grand stand in the Western Oval.

The reporter used the demise of the "old and decayed, worn out not so much with use as with disuse" grandstand to track the loss of what he called *"perfervidum animum Scoterum"* in Ballarat; he claimed that although once the Caledonian gathering was regarded as the leading athletic sports meeting in the district, the present day (1880) had seen the development of the railway and the consequent usurpation of this proud title. Memories of the grand days of revelry and merry making were still vivid, but, like the grandstand itself, were now consigned to the past. So, too, the organisers - those "masters of the revels", the committeemen whose hard work staged the games for Ballarat's enjoyment.

"Where are they now, that stalwart band of energetic Scotsmen?" wistfully asked the *Star* reporter. He answered his own question. Some still remained in Ballarat, a few had moved elsewhere, and "many of those leal and genial hearts have gone from us entirely…"[84] The fate of the Ballarat Caledonian Society in the long term is unknown, but it is interesting to note the apparent reformation of the group in July 1896.

Burns' Days were also regularly observed in Ballarat, initially with the expected gusto. The Edinburgh Castle Hotel was the favoured venue in 1857, (later the headquarters of the Caledonian Society), and "the lovers of Burns and his poems" assembled therein under the presidency of no less a person than the mayor of Ballarat West. A night of speeches, pipe music, songs and

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[84] *Ballarat Star,* 3rd July, 1880.

recitations, and of course, the inevitable haggis, kept loyal Scots entertained until the early hours of the morning.

The following year, 1858, was particularly notable, since it was the one hundredth anniversary of the Scottish poet. Ballarat did him proud.

Revellers gathered at the Miners' Royal Exchange on Monday 25 January for a Grand Dinner and Full Dress Ball; tickets admitting a gentleman to dinner, with the "privilege" of introducing a lady to the Ball, cost £2/10s. This, it can be seen, was not an event for the down-at-heel.

Burns' Nights were conducted on a regular, annual basis with the traditional pipe music, speeches, and recitations, "Tam o'Shanter" being a particular favourite. Sadly, however, by 1899, observance of the poet's birthday had fallen on hard times. The *Star* regretfully noted that the day's celebrations would "lack some of its special features of past years and be tinged with a considerable sense of regret". The newspaper was merely remarking on the inevitable: the obvious fact that, as the century came to an end, so too, had that "energetic band of stalwart Scotsmen" who had for forty or so years staunchly upheld the traditions and beliefs of their native land. The early generations had passed away, and the commemoration of such events as Burns' birthday assumed a less relevant position in the society. No longer a Grand Dinner and Full Dress Ball, but merely "the customary tribute" of a wreath of flowers and tartan around the statue in Sturt Street, and a haggis supper in the City Hall that evening. That sad little wreath, propped in desultory fashion against the statue which had twelve years earlier witnessed such vigorous displays of public enthusiasm, seemed to epitomise the fate of the Scots in Ballarat. The

lack-lustre report in the newspaper prefigures the fading of these redoubtable, steadfast men and women.

As Federation approached, public mention of things Scottish seemed more to be in context with other Celtic groups, and seemed to be in terms of the resolution of a dichotomy of loyalties between the larger concept of Australian/British nationality, and their specific Scottish loyalties. An example of this can be found in the debate engendered by the visit to Ballarat of Governor Hopetoun (a Scotsman) in January, 1890, right on the cusp of the Federation decade. On the occasion of his visit, the Governor was treated to a splendid banquet; however, a member of the Scottish community got extremely irate about the position of the local dignitaries at the official table. The ensuing debate tells us a great deal about the important frame of mind which was beginning to be prevalent in Ballarat amongst Celtic peoples in general, and Scottish folk in particular.

"Scotus" conducted a vigorous correspondence in *The Star*, in which Withers and one other took part. According to Scotus, the seating arrangement at the central table was unacceptable. There was Archdeacon Julius, that "much esteemed dignitary of the Anglican Church", at the table of honour, but where was the Presbyterian minister? Not at the best table - he was "at a seat below the salt"! "National Fairplay" was the theme of the debate, and the writer felt duty-bound to point out that

> very often the slights and offences to the national sentiments of Irishmen, Scotsmen and Welshmen are committed unintentionally by Englishmen, and are repeated simply because Irishmen, Scotsmen and

> Welshmen are too modest or are too "mealy-mouthed" to point out the wrong-doing.[85]

According to Scotus, the Governor should have been treated as a member of the Church of Scotland, "the Church of his own native land", and therefore at the central table should have been the representative of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, "the Church which is here the representative of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland". The reply, by "WHG" in the *Star*[86] noted:

> We honour the Earl of Hopetoun because he represents the English monarch, and the Monarch of England must be by law a member of the Church of England.

This upset Scotus still further. Having set the "Champion of English ignorance" right on a few basic facts, he proceeded to point out that if

> WHG wishes to separate himself and his countrymen from Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen, or to regard Englishmen as the only representatives of the United Kingdom [then] he will meet with little sympathy from his countrymen, generally, who I am sure all wish to join heartily in building up here a glorious British Australian Dominion.[87]

Scotus encapsulated the new debate: loyalty to the Empire, and loyalty to the homeland, to be resolved in loyalty to Australia.

National honour must be respected, but never, in Australia, at the expense of British unity:

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[85] *Ballarat Star,* 9 January, 1890.
[86] *Ballarat Star*, 10 January, 1890.
[87] *Ballarat Star*, 11 January, 1890.

> Surely it is possible for Englishmen or the colonial descendants of Englishmen to remember that Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen have feelings of national honour as well as Englishmen have, and that is not only a matter of politeness and of national justice, but it is a public duty to respect them. I appeal to all fair-minded Englishmen to see that in future this duty is carried out, and that they take care to set their faces against, and to stigmatize as an offence against that feeling of British Unity which we here in Australia all ardently desire to foster, and to cultivate, any act, whether intentional or otherwise, which is calculated to offend the national sentiment of Irishmen, Scotsmen, or Welshmen.[88]

Cumming has argued that the retained elements of Scottishness were those which gave the Scots in Victoria the confidence to establish themselves. This chapter claims that the Ballarat experience was for these elements of Scottishness to become corrupted and altered as the century progressed, so that "all their Scottish ways" were a rather hollow imitation of the original customs. Caledonian societies, churches, Burns' Nights - these 'symbols of Scottishness' were less reiterations of present Scottishness than empty intimations of a recreated past which held little relevance to life in nineteenth century Ballarat. The more overriding concern of the Ballarat Scot seemed to be to make their mark as Australians.

Historians identify the Scottish ability to colonise and assimilate successfully; Eric Richards wrote: "I have found it very difficult to follow their [the emigrants'] assimilation. They seem to evaporate very quickly."[89] Donna Hellyer, writing about the Highlanders, believed that "the Highlanders adapted too well … so well that by the end of the century they had become

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[88] *Ballarat Star*, 8 January, 1890.

almost indistinguishable from the general run of nineteenth century immigrants."[90] Malcolm Prentis asserts:

> The Scots' contribution was seldom obtrusive; but it was strong in areas of their traditional strengths; in skilled working of land, calculating entrepreneurship and civic involvement, in the ideal of universal education attuned to the needs of the modern world and through their solid, dour religion.[91]

Pragmatism was the cornerstone of their existence, and it was this sentiment which built the churches, the schools, the newspapers, the businesses and the industries of Ballarat. Their obvious Scottish 'ways' were subsumed by the passage of time, and by the cultural mix which constituted Ballarat in the latter half of the nineteenth century; numerically, they were not significant in Ballarat, but almost disproportionately, every Presbyterian church building and every Ballarat institution sported more than one Scottish name. Historically, they are a quietly elusive group, difficult to enumerate, or even pin down, but between 1851 and 1901 the Scots of Ballarat made a particular mark. As Cumming argues, they deliberately fostered a "national distinctiveness" which would "fulfil the vision of a colony prosperous, free and liberal."[92] The achievement of such a vision - at the Ballarat level - was managed at the expense of Scottish identity, and as a natural corollary of the emergence of second and third generation Scottish Australians.

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[89] Richards, Eric, quoted from a letter in Hellyer, Donna," "The Humblies", The Emigration of Highland Scots to Victoria in the 1850s via the Highland and Island Emigration Society", MA, University of Melbourne, 1983, Preface, p. iv.
[90] Hellyer, Donna, "The Humblies: Scottish Highland Emigration to and Settlement in Victoria, 1850 -1890" , *Australia 1888 Bulletin No. 10,* September, 1982, pp. 63 - 67.
[91] Prentis, *Scots in Australia*, p. 277.
[92] Cumming, "Scots in Port Phillip", *Australian Celtic Journal*, 1990- 1001, p. 23.

The Scottish, the 'builders and the beautifiers' of Ballarat, seized the freedom which gold provided: "Now I think this is the richest town of its size in all the world; all the go is gold! gold! gold!"[93] and set about building a community. Evidence of Scottish nationalism, whilst present, is not so dramatic as the evidence of the Scottish effort to move across national borders to embrace a wider concept. The challenge of the new world was met by the Scots of Ballarat with alacrity:

> I am alive, well, and quite happy in the wilderness of Australia.[94]

The Ballarat Scots prospered, yet in celebrating this achievement, they surrendered their 'Scottish ways' to the abstract notion of 'being Australian'.

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[93] *Letters from Highland Emigrants,* quoted in Hellyer, "The Humblies", 1983; Letter from Donald MacCaskill to his sister, Effy, Devil's River, 17 November, 1852.

[94] *Letters from Highland Emigrants … ,* quoted in Hellyer, "The Humblies", 1983. From Donald MacCaskill to his sister Effy, Devil's River, 17 November, 1852.

CHAPTER

5

The Irish:

'Unity within Diversity'[1], Ballarat, 1851 -1901

The Irish were "a founding and forming people,"[2] constituting in the nineteenth and early twentieth century around 25% of the white Australian population. This chapter will, having briefly set the context for the significant migration of Irish which occurred to Australia, and to Ballarat, examine the consequences of being Irish in Ballarat. The chapter will address the many anomalies concerning the Irish presence in Ballarat, and try to come to some understanding of the apparent perversity of their presence, and how it often helped to generate an atmosphere of political and social diversity within that society in the half century after the discovery of gold.

The chapter will argue that the Irish, more than any of the other Celtic groups on Ballarat, brought their emotional and cultural 'baggage' with them, and in so doing played a significant role in recognising and defining the differences between Ballarat and the Mother Country.[3]

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[1] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 261.

[2] MacDonagh, Oliver, *The Sharing of the Green: A Modern Irish History for Australians*, Allen & Unwin, St. Leonards, New South Wales, 1996, pxii.
Dianne Campbell in "A Study in Influence: Anglo-Irish Lawyers in Early Ballarat", 2001, describes 'Anglo-Irish' in terms of the cultural separation which existed between the Ascendancy elite and the 'mere Irish' in colonial Victoria, "the Gaelic speaking Catholic emigrants who became the Irish majority in Ballarat with the arrival of the 1850s goldrush. Being Anglo-Irish, claims Campbell, "was essentially about membership of an educated, privileged class." p. 2.

Figure 21.

Source: http://www.irelandnow.com/around/mainimages/mapireland.gif

Figure 22 The Irish Emigrant

The political and religious affiliations of the Irish in Ballarat are explored specifically with a view to understanding the process by which Ballarat Irish could retain a vehemently Irish voice, and yet ultimately become part of a larger and distinctively Australian citizenry.

The chapter examines the geographical clustering of the Irish in and around Ballarat, and argues that the Irish sense of place shaped the manner in which parts of the Ballarat region were settled, and also the nature of the population mix which settled there. Preconceived ideas of Irish nationality and the nature of Irishness also became evident in the interpretation of such settlements.

C.E. Jones, nineteenth century Victorian politician and opportunist, made a controversial statement in 1864 when he referred to the 'savages of Bungaree', (which has become a possibly over-utilised term to describe the Irish of Ballarat and district). This statement played on popular perceptions of the Irish which are discussed in the light of the Ballarat experience. The rough and tumble of Ballarat's political life in the fifty years leading to Federation, partly epitomised by the Jones incident, cannot be adequately understood without consideration of the role played by the Irish. The chapter will examine the issue of education as a powerful example of the seminal role which the Irish were able to play in influencing some political and social outcomes in Ballarat.

Finally, the chapter will demonstrate that the Irishness of the Irish in Ballarat was probably more firmly entrenched, and lasted longer, than any of the four ethnic Celtic groups. For this reason, their chapter has been placed at the end of this thesis; for the Irish more consistently distanced themselves from the

mantle of the British than any of the Cornish, Welsh or Scottish folk who lived in Ballarat in the years 1851- 1901. Yet it will be suggested that the perceived advantages of belonging to the greatest Empire on earth ultimately dimmed even the bright green of Erin.

Unlike Cornwall, Wales and Scotland, the Irish nation is physically as well as spiritually located away from England. Lying to the west of Great Britain, Ireland is about 302 miles long from north to south, and about 171 miles from east to west. Divided into Northern Ireland, and Eire, Ireland is bounded entirely by sea, with the Atlantic Ocean to the north, west and south, and the Irish Sea and St. George's Channel separating it from Great Britain to the east. Ireland covers an area of approximately 27,137 square miles. Physically, the country is almost all lowland, being formed of low hills, lakes, bog areas, with low ridges interrupting the landscape of the lowlands in many places. Less than 15% of the country rises above 700 feet.[4]

The climate is moist and humid, with a high rainfall, and cool year-round temperatures; less than one-eighth of the land is considered arable, with little or no mineral resources.

The history of this small island, like that of the other Celtic kingdoms, stretches back to ancient times, beginning somewhere around 6000 BC, with hunters and fisher folk on the eastern coast. At around 300 BC, the Celts arrived, and in the fifth century, St. Patrick arrived, and is credited with 'Christianizing' the entire country. The development of the Irish church can be traced from here, and Irish missionaries were sent out all

over Europe. Domination by the Norse followed in 795, and this ended in a battle won by Ireland's High King, Brian Boru, in 1014. In 1171, the invasion of Ireland by the Norman king Henry 2, ended the independent existence of Gaelic Ireland. Domination by English overlords continued, in one form or another, until in 1691 the Battle of the Boyne resulted in total Anglican domination of land and political office in Ireland, even though the Anglicans only represented about one-tenth of the population.

The next century saw continued agitation for more Catholic rights, and lessened English control, and in 1801, as a direct result of the 1798 rebellion, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland came into existence. This was not a popular union, and agitation continued against the legislation, and English overlordism. When the potato crop, staple subsistence crop of most of the population, failed in the Great Famine of 1846 - 1851, the already negative effects of the union were exacerbated.[5] Many thousands emigrated: it is estimated that, between 1850 and the end of the century, the "stampede from death" sent over two million Irish overseas, away from their homeland forever.[6] Overall, the total who emigrated between 1815 and 1920 was a staggering ten million people - a huge transference of humanity from the old to the new world.

The Irish, more than any other national group (save the English), have imposed their presence on the 'web' of Australia's history. Sheer emigration numbers alone dictate that the historian must take note of their coming. The proportion of 'Irishness' in Australia is considerably higher than anywhere else on earth, (apart from Ireland itself), and this, according

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[4] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974, 1987, pp. 378 -380.
[5] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* pp. 378 - 380.

to MacDonagh, is good enough reason alone for Australians to know something of modern Irish history, since to do so should lead to an understanding of the "derivation of a large part of themselves".[7]

They travelled to a destination which was both like and unlike anything they had known in the old country. The new colony of Victoria, born as gold was discovered in 1851, was also a 'new' society, a clean slate, and the Irish were quick to take advantage of this unique situation. As MacDonagh points out, almost the entire population of Victoria during the era 1851 - 1901 was "largely composed of direct immigrants and their immediate descendants". He points out that we are, in fact, dealing with much less than a lifespan, and he, too, is beguiled by the fact that Victoria in these years constituted virgin ground, "the infancy and first childhood of a new state."[8]. This fact, he argues, enables us to confidently isolate and deal with the Irish as a distinct and homogenous group.[9] The known numerical strength of the Irish in Victoria is one of its most significant features, and the accuracy and availability of the aforementioned statistics are essential for any significant treatment of the role which the Irish might have played in Victorian or, more particularly, Ballarat, politics.

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[6] McConville Chris, *Croppies, Celts, and Catholics The Irish in Australia,* Edward Arnold, Caulfield, Victoria, 1987, p. 30.

[7] MacDonagh, *The Sharing of the Green,* 1996, p. xi.

[8] MacDonagh, Oliver, "The Irish in Victoria, 1851 - 91: a demographic essay", *ANU Historical Journal,* Volumes 10 & 11 (1973 - 1974), p. 27.

[9] MacDonagh, Oliver, "The Irish in Victoria …", *ANU Historical Journal*, p. 27. MacDonagh points out the difficulties inherent in generalising about an ethnic group based entirely on birth - place returns. These generalisations become "progressively more circumscribed and tenuous as time proceeds"; however, the value of religion statistics is that the "correlation of Irish-born and Catholics was extraordinarily and persistently high." In fact, MacDonagh points out that it is possible to "trace with fair confidence the behaviour and fortunes of our ethnic group through the medium of its preponderant religion."

In the eight censuses of 1851 - 1901, the Irish Catholic element in Victoria was notable particularly for its constancy:

Table 6[10]

YEAR	% CATHOLIC POPULATION IN VICTORIA
1851	23.9
1854	19.05
1857	18.83
1861	20.44
1871	23.32
1881	23.60
1891	32.80
1901	21.95

As MacDonagh points out, these figures are especially notable for a society in which the population numbers were, generally speaking, in a constant state of flux. The discovery of gold had turned Victoria into a virtual maelstrom of population activity, with wildly fluctuating movements of people between colonies, as well as from overseas destinations, altering the male/female ratio, the age structure, and deeply affecting the social mobility and fluidity of the society. In such a context, the relative stability of the Catholic population was remarkable, and provided a firm base from

[10] MacDonagh, "The Irish in Victoria …", *A.N.U. Historical Journal*, p. 28.

which the Irish Catholics of Victoria could operate for almost the entire first fifty formative years of the colony's existence.

The type of Irish Catholic emigrant who came to this colony is also important when attempting to describe the role which that nation's immigrants played in moulding the character of the society which eventually entered the twentieth century. The Irish who came to Victoria in the latter half of the nineteenth century were, largely speaking, pressured to come here because of the lack of land in Ireland, and the necessary corollary of needing to survive off that land. Most of Victoria's migrants came from the southwest counties of Clare, Tipperary, Galway and Kilkenny. Migration from Ireland to Australia was generally post-Famine, with the after effects of the Famine, rather than the actual disaster itself, much more significant in the Victorian scenario. The expense of the voyage to Australia meant that those who might have left the stricken land were unable to do so; a passage to North America cost at most one-fifth as much as one to Australia, and even the voyage to America was almost beyond most of the prospective Irish immigrants.[11] Chain migration was, nevertheless, a significant factor in Irish immigration, in both the Australian and the United States context.

In the Famine decade of 1841-50, under 2% of those who left Ireland came to Australia, about 23,000. In the 1851-60 decade Australia received almost five times that number of Irish, 101,540, or 8.3% of the total; in 1861-70, it was 82,900 or 10% of the total who left Ireland; in the seventies it was 61,946, or 11.4%, and in the eighties, 55,476, or 7.55%, declining rapidly

[11] Coughlan, Neil, "The Coming of the Irish to Victoria", *Historical Studies* 12, October 1965, p 73. Coughlan notes that the low cost of the American voyage (sometimes down to £1 during the Famine) was still a formidable hurdle for most Irish.

after that. Such statistics convey quite clearly that it was the gold rushes which established the Irish population in Victoria/Australia.[12]

There is some debate amongst historians about the nature of those Irish who emigrated to Australia during those post-famine years, and about the forces which were responsible for propelling them southwards, rather than to the United States. O'Farrell was anxious to characterise these people as coming "in search of gold, land, fortune and adventure: they were a much more accomplished, venturesome and happy lot than those the Famine had dumped on America."[13] David Fitzpatrick, a little more prosaic, suggested that it was lack of land which drove the Irish away from home, and that "a strong correlation existed between the shrinkage of tillage land and the tendency to send emigrants to Australia"; Fitzpatrick argued that much of the Irish-Australian migration can be interpreted as a response "to recent or threatened loss of social status at home". In this case, of course, social status is associated with the ownership of land.[14]

Coughlan argued the land case, and stressed the changing nature of land ownership in Ireland after the Famine. He identified the existence of land which had been foreclosed because its tenants were unable, during the Famine, to pay the rent; these tenants then found that, in the aftermath of the Famine, those landowners who had acquired land in lieu of payment were not inclined to return it to the original tenants. This swelled the ranks of the unemployed, already large after the Famine, and this large "indigestible mass" of destitute labourers and small farmers (many of

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[12] These figures are taken from O'Farrell, Patrick, *The Irish in Australia*, New South Wales University Press, 1986, p. 63.
[13] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, p. 63.
[14] Fitzpatrick, David, "Irish Immigrants in Australia: Patterns of Settlement and Paths of Mobility" *Australia 1888 Bulletin,* no. 2, August 1979, p. 50.

whom were also being forced into the workhouse because they were unable to meet the increasingly high poor-rates needed to support the landless labourers) had little alternative but to emigrate. Coughlan argued for an increasingly shrewd tendency in Ireland (post-Famine) for elder sons to maintain and even increase the size of family land holdings, often at the expense of younger sons and daughters; again, the main alternative for such displaced siblings was to emigrate. [15]

Both Fitzpatrick and Coughlan identified the Irish emigrants to Australia, and Victoria, as largely unskilled, 'labourers', and farmers (according to ships' rolls)[16]; Fitzpatrick stressed that "the immediate background of most Irish settlers in Australia was … one of gradual recovery and social reorganisation, rather than disaster and impoverishment".[17] He further most usefully, and with great insight, supplied an image of the "identikit Irish assisted immigrant", who, "embodied 'human capital' in the form of vigour rather than skill. The vast majority of men described themselves as plain 'labourers' or 'agricultural labourers', and the women as 'domestic servants'."[18] These categories, however, according to Fitzpatrick, were broad-based: the 'agricultural labourer' was probably a farmer's son, and the 'servant' might never have served outside her mother's household. Irish immigrants were also predominantly illiterate, at least until the 1860s; they were also, as previously pointed out, almost totally Catholic.

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[15] See also McConville, Chris, "The Victorian Irish: Emigrants and Families, 1851 - 1891", *Families in Colonial Australia,* Grimshaw, McConville, and McEwan, (ed.), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p. 1, for further discussion of this point; also, Sherington, Geoffrey, *Australia's Immigrants 1788 - 1978* , Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1980, p. 80.
[16] Coughlan, "The Coming of the Irish to Victoria", p. 84.
[17] Fitzpatrick David, *Oceans of Consolation Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1995, p. 8.
[18] Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, p. 13.

Coughlan drew on the shipping lists to fill in the picture of the Irish emigrant to Victoria. He pointed out that these lists support the statement that Irish migration was composed of young bachelors and spinsters: "one Irish male adult in ten was married" (for the English and Scottish, one in four) with an even greater disparity amongst the women. "One in five of the Irish were emigrating in family groups (as mother and daughter)", compared to English and Scottish women, where the figure was three in five. In age groupings, 79% of the Irish males and 74% of the Irish females were between the ages of 17 and 31; of the English and Scottish, only 54% of the males, and 42% of the females were in this span.[19]

As O'Farrell has pointed out, the Irish came before and during the gold rushes. What had been a mere trickle before 1851 increased to a significant percentage after the discovery of gold in Victoria. O'Farrell, again, located the Irish migrant in Victoria thus: "concentrations of Irish developed … around Geelong, in the mixed-farming districts around Kilmore, north of Melbourne, and in the Western districts, particularly inland from Belfast (now Port Fairy) and Warrnambool."[20] O'Farrell subscribes to the theory that most Irish gravitated towards rural areas and pursuits, but also identifies the gold rushes as changing this tendency to rural settlement:

> from 1850 [the grand rural life] was reduced to merely a facet of a much wider and more populous Irish Australian experience: the discovery of gold changed Australia's Irish reputation from that of prison to El Dorado and created a melting pot which vastly accelerated the process of Irish assimilation.[21]

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[19] Coughlan, "The Coming of the Irish to Victoria", p. 84.
[20] O'Farrell, *Irish in Victoria*, pp. 86 - 88.
[21] O'Farrell, *Irish in Victoria* p. 90.

Richard Broome claimed that the Irish were dispersed throughout Victoria, but did not gravitate to the urban areas as their kin did in North America and England. Broome, too, identified 'clustering': Kildare (West Geelong), Irishtown (South Geelong), Kilmore, Kyneton, Keilor, and in the regions of the north-east and Warrnambool.[22] Fitzpatrick, concerned with analysis of Irish settlement patterns, noted two areas in which the Irish were distinctive: they "showed a surprising tendency to settle where the English and Scots did not." As well, the heaviest concentration of Irish settlers "was found neither in the cities nor the outback, but in relatively populous regions often enclosing major towns."[23]

In Ballarat, the tendency of the Irish to gather in population 'clusters' was even more pronounced than it was with the Cornish. As well, the availability of more specific Census figures actually identifies the Irish as a separate national group, which enables the historian to better interpret the demography of the region. Areas around Bungaree and Dunnstown became identified with the Irish fairly quickly after initial settlement, and they serve as useful examples of the nature of the relationship developed by the Irish with the land. Certainly the Cornish claimed (at least initially) certain locations within the Ballarat urban area as their own, and there were acknowledged clusters of Welsh in Sebastopol, but these tended to dwindle and diminish by the end of the century, whereas the Irish clusters, if anything, strengthened. As well, other Celtic concentrations tended to limit themselves mainly to merely gathering together in groups, largely for the purposes of church-going and community support. The Irish took the whole concept further: numerically greater, they have been shown to have physically and consciously altered the rural landscape in which they settled so that it did in

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[22] Broome, Richard, *The Victorians Arriving,* p. 102.
[23] Fitzpatrick, "Irish Immigrants in Australia", p. 50.

fact begin to resemble a little the landscape of Ireland. Planted hedges, still surviving today in the area, remain testament to the Irish desire to recreate something of the neat and ordered effect of their Irish homeland. In effect, the spiritual strength, or the ability of the Irish to bring their sense of Ireland with them, manifested itself physically in certain areas. No other Celtic group in Ballarat had this conviction, or went this far. John Murphy[24] and Dianne Cahir[25] have both carried out detailed studies of the Dunnstown and Bungaree[26] areas around Ballarat, and both have challenged the assumption that the Irish settled in these areas because they resembled Ireland. They argue that these gathering points for the Irish have undergone significant physical change as a result of the Irish settlement in the area. Dianne Cahir points out that the nature of the country around Dunnstown at first settlement was not "rolling hills and potato crops", but large tracts of "rich lands thickly timbered with gum, stringy bark and lightwood" and "good lands moderately timbered with gum".[27]

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[24] Murphy, John, "The Savages of Bungaree: Irish Settlement in the Bungaree District" Honours thesis, ACU, 1995.

[25] Cahir, Dianne, *Spuds, Saints and Scholars Irish Settlement and the Development of Catholicity in Dunnstown,* D. Cahir, Ballarat, 1999.

[26] "Dunnstown is in the Warrenheip Parish in the Shire of Moorabool, county of Grant. It is also in the Catholic Parish of Bungaree, which is part of the Ballarat Diocese. The town of Dunnstown encompasses an area of two square miles. Dunnstown and the neighbouring towns of Bungaree, Millbrook, Navigator and Warrenheip make up the area affectionately referred to as "Little Ireland". In 1864, Dunn's Town had a population of 350. According to postal records for the Dunnstown Post Office, the population had grown to 600 by 1879. In 1998 … thirty six of the sixty seven dwellings house families who are fifth or sixth generation descendants of the original Irish settlers. Birth or marriage relates forty-three families - approximately two thirds of the population - to one or more other families. … This two thirds of the population also make up the Irish Catholic contingent. It is little wonder that the town is affectionately called "Little Ireland"." Cahir: *Spuds, Saints, and Scholars* pp. 3 - 4.

[27] Cahir, *Spuds, Saints and Scholars,* p. 6.

Peter Read explores this idea of the relationship between land and people in his work *Returning to Nothing The Meaning of Lost Places*[28]. Read quotes the philosopher Gaston Bachelard who believed that

> all really inhabited space bears the essence of the nature of home, that the human imagination begins to create a recognisable place wherever people find the slightest shelter, walls of impalpable shadows or the illusion of protection.

Read summarises the human instinct to "turn space into place" … "to identify a site as in some way different from other sites, ... to live or work in it, or to call it home." He recognises an important conclusion which can be drawn from the contemporary literature of place studies: "the ways in which humans demarcate their space are bound by the rules and customs of the cultures of which they form a part." Furthermore, he argues that

> this shaping of identifiable sites affects both the physical appearance of places (for example, boundary fences and street signs), and the way they are conceptualised.[29]

Early land records establish the fact that the land around Ballarat was not, initially, a 'little bit of Ireland', but one which was made so. John Murphy showed that the Bungaree district was initially (in the late 1850s and early 1860s) a much more ethnically mixed area than popular historical myth records. Irish settlers then accounted for less than half the population, which was a mix of Scottish, English and Irish.[30] By 1891, the Irish were in

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[28] Read, Peter, *Returning to Nothing The Meaning of Lost Places,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Melbourne, 1996.
[29] Read, *Returning to Nothing* , p. 2.
[30] Murphy, "Savages of Bungaree", p 8; see ABS Census of Victoria, 1851, and 1891. Murphy quotes the 1861 Census figures, thus: net population in the Warrenheip and Bungaree parishes was 2001. Of these, 664 were born in Victoria, 623 born in either England, Scotland or Wales, whilst 566 were born in Ireland. Church of England numbered 643, and Roman

Figure 23 Survey map of Warrenheip

Catholic numbered 855. Figures from Australian Bureau of Statistics: Census of Victoria 1861, M/fiche 4/10, p 8, Table xiii, and Table xii. See Murphy, "Savages of Bungaree", p. 26.

a majority and it would appear that a process of 'Irish-isation' had occurred, with the movement of non-Irish settlers away from the district, and a corresponding increase in the Irish population. Similarly, Cahir finds for the area in and around Dunnstown, that "the original holders of "Our Little Ireland" were not Irish but rather English and Scottish squatters."[31] The story of this area, too, is one of original ethnically-mixed settlers who cleared and cultivated the forested land, and grew grain crops such as might be relevant for the supply of the growing goldfields population. The timber industry, too, was well-supported, as saw-mills began to serve the huge demand for sawn timber which came from the mines once the alluvial gold began to run out, and deep lead mining began.

Weston Bate, in his *Lucky City*, details the changes in land settlement and ownership which underlined the developments in these areas, pointing out that in 1865 the first effective Selection Act enabled and stimulated land settlement close to the goldfields, providing not only an excellent market, but good opportunities for labour. "Selectors", notes Bate, "could turn to shearing, harvesting, firewood contracts, splitting, fencing, charcoal burning and various other pursuits in the expanding economy of Ballarat."[32] Potato crops were introduced later, as Cahir has pointed out.[33]

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[31] Cahir, *Spuds, Saints, and Scholars*, p. 9.
[32] Bate, *Lucky City*, pp. 121- 122.
[33] Cahir, *Spuds, Saints and Scholars*, p 10. Cahir establishes that for most of the nineteenth century, the preferred crop of Dunnstown was barley, which was grown to supply the needs of the breweries and distillery in the area. Potatoes yielded only 11% of the crop of this area, whereas barley yielded 22%. It was only in the early twentieth century that the Irish of the area turned to potato farming. Cahir, pp. 17 - 18.

The look of the land was shaped, therefore, initially, by the needs of the population, the nature of the acts governing land availability, and the nature of the economy of Ballarat and the surrounding district. It was not settled by the Irish because it looked like Ireland. It was settled by the Irish, with others, and was subject to a number of these aforementioned pressures. However, by the end of the century, there had been a significant increase in the Irish population, and an accompanying decrease in other national groups. Such a phenomenon seems to indicate that some other process was occurring in these regions surrounding Ballarat.

Irish-Australian historian Patrick O'Farrell, with David Fitzpatrick, identifies the proper understanding of "the Irish immigrant mind" [34] as a necessary criterion for comprehending the Irish immigrant experience. In seeking to understand the nature of the relationship between the Irish and their settlement in early Ballarat it is both useful and important to examine this "hidden world which will illuminate the basis for that Irish reaction which lay behind their creative, liberating challenge to the Australian colonial status quo."[35] No other people, according to O'Farrell, so strongly identified with a particular landscape as the Irish. Those who travelled to Australia were, much more than the English and the Scots with whom they travelled (according to O'Farrell) "full of backward looks. The smell of grass, a song, the twist of a landscape prompted nostalgia to come unbidden, with a sickening sense of loss."[36] When trying to understand the motivation behind the nature of the settlements at Dunnstown and Bungaree - and indeed, when trying to comprehend the entire Irish immigrant experience in Ballarat - it is essential to concede this

[34] O'Farrell, Patrick:,"Landscapes of the Irish Immigrant Mind", in *Stories of Australian Migration,* ed. John Hardy, New South Wales University Press, 1988, pp. 33 -46.
[35] O'Farrell, "Landscapes of the Irish Immigrant Mind", p. 34.

fundamental truth about the Irish psyche, the "operative centre of the world view of the Irish". They were, argues O'Farrell:

> a people with a profound sense of locality, of Irish place, which was highly territorial, familial, and personal, rooted deeply in a pagan, pre-Christian past, and integral to the whole structure of Gaelic society. The individual's locality was a fundamental facet of his identity, his particular place was part of the person in a way that defined and positioned him in his own world and among his own people.[37]

Such a strong sense of locality - this "fundamental facet of (their) identity" - must, then, have been instrumental in causing the Irish immigrants to shape their new surroundings, as much as possible, so that they began to resemble that of Ireland herself.

McConville quotes A.M. Sullivan on the difference in outlook between an Irish and an English tenant farmer. In contrast to the English farmer, who "simply hired the use of a farm with all its appurtenances, fixtures, and conveniences, … just as one might engage a fishing boat," the Irish tenant farmer had a different perspective:

> As a rule his farm had been to him and his forefathers for generations a fixed and cherished home. Every bush and brake, every shrub and tree, every meadow path or grassy knoll has some association for him which is as it were, a part of his existence.… Removal in his case is a tearing up by the roots, where transplantation is death …. The attachment of the Irish peasant to his farm is something almost impossible to be comprehended by those who have not spent their lives amongst the class and seen

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[36] O'Farrell, "Landscapes of the Irish Immigrant Mind", p. 35.
[37] O'Farrell, "Landscapes of the Irish Immigrant Mind" , p. 37.

from day to day the depth and force and intensity of these home feelings.[38]

Figure 24 Potato Growing Ireland and Ballarat

[38] McConville, Chris, *Croppies, Celts and Catholics,* 1987, p. 47, [quoted from Sullivan, A.M.,

New Ireland Glasgow 1877, pp. 118 -119].

David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation* selected and analysed a few individual experiences of migration, as represented in the correspondence of Irish settlers in Australia[39], and some of these accounts give a vivid picture of the passion of the Irish immigrant for home. These valuable primary sources[40] illustrate the "backward looks" of the Irish immigrant as he speaks to the people at home; they show the eagerness of the exile for all the minutiae of everyday life: visits of and to aunts and uncles, the farm - chickens, horses, and crops. These small items assume an importance and an interest only possible for those who could no longer share them, or be a part of the life in which they occurred.

Biddy Burke writes of her nieces:

> I heare they ar growing up fine girls like their Aunt Biddy … Dont I often wish I could see them now. … How ar they all & not forgeting the old neighbours of sweet Balrobuck beg. I supose it as green & wet as ever." She longed "for the day that I will be gone down the Bay to meet them with the Help of God", and uttered "the deepest thought in my heart does the water still come into the Yard in winter times & I supose all the Visstoers [*visitors*] they same as ever. Dont I often think of them times.[41]

Another of Fitzpatrick's migrants, Patrick Comber, wistfully recalled his brothers in Clare :

> How I would like to have them round me again fighting with them; I can see now they were the real pleasant times."

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[39] Fitzpatrick, David, *Oceans of Consolation,* 1995; see Introduction, p. 5.
[40] Such material as Fitzpatrick has gathered in his prodigious work *Oceans of Consolation* is reminiscent of the letters held in the South Australian Library relating to the Cornish. Love of Cornwall as depicted in these letters also strongly characterises the Cornish immigrant.
[41] Fitzpatrick, David, *Oceans of Consolation* p. 615.

He missed his friends …

> "When I think of old times, in my own School days and think of friends and companions so widely dissevered - some by the wide ocean and others by the wider barrier of the grave, it makes me melancholy enough.[42]

Comber was pathetically grateful to be able to garner news from 'home'… He was in a "wild and dreary country" and manifestly longed for family contact:

> You cannot conceive what delight it gives me to read a home letter, to a person far removed from it. It is like a link between bygone times and the present. Something to remind a person that although oceans separate him from all he cares for or loves on earth, there are still a father and mother, brothers and sisters to think of him.[43]

O'Farrell suggested that, ultimately, the Irish emigrant who stepped forward "into the vastness of the revealed world" held the image of a familiar island always close to his heart, and in fact left a part of himself - a "shadow-self" - forever in Ireland.[44]

Whatever the reality, the nostalgic image of Ireland which many immigrants carried with them was certainly a factor in Ballarat in the nineteenth century. The Ballarat *Star*, in 1880, attempted to articulate this 'otherworldness' of the Irish, and claimed the importance of the ongoing

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[42] Fitzpatrick, David, *Oceans of Consolation* p. 616.
[43] Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation,* p. 242.
[44] O'Farrell, Patrick,"Defining Place and Home: Are the Irish Prisoners of Place?"in *Home or Away? Immigrants in Colonial Australia Visible Immigrants: Three*, ed. David Fitzpatrick Division of Historical Studies and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, Canberra 1992, p. 18.

and determined celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Ballarat as crucial to the maintenance of such a quality:

> Today our Irish citizens will celebrate the anniversary of their patron saint. Of the four saints of Britain and Ireland, but two are now honoured by having a day set apart and devoted to merry-making or other mode of perpetuating their memory, and of the two, St. Patrick and St. David, the former appears to be the more popular, no doubt on account of the great superiority in the numbers of the followers of that genial saint. The object served by these gatherings is not so much that the memory of St. Patrick should be honoured thereby as that the strong and fervent patriotism of Irishmen should be kept alive, that the love of what is termed affectionately "the old country" should not be allowed to smoulder into a set of vague terms and half-forgotten lore. The ardent nature of the Irish people is affected by this "conceit of the mind" much more intensely than is that of their more phlegmatic Saxon brothers. An Irishman cannot forget the land of his birth, its fresh green meadows, "with here and there a violet bestrewn". Its lakes and rocks are to him objects almost sacred, and in his contemplation of the days he spent amid its beauties all the dark shades are scattered by the brightness of the generous sunshine which illumines his memory of the "good land, green land - dear Ireland".[45]

The transformation of parts of the landscape around Ballarat to that which is, even today, still recognised as resembling Ireland, is significant because it begins to suggest that the strength of the Irish memory of "good land, green land - dear Ireland" was such that it was capable of an actual physical manifestation.

In other ways, the 'Irishness' of the Irish in Ballarat manifested itself. As a percentage of the population, the Irish were always a significant minority

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[45] *Star,* 17 March, 1880.

in Ballarat, which must certainly have been influential in itself. Although an important number of them did indeed move to outlying areas, most remained in the closer urban area of Ballarat, and mined, built and traded within the 'melting pot' environment of the Golden City. The true story of the achievements and activities of these Irish emigrants has been invariably obscured by the image of the Irish which pursued them relentlessly throughout the century. The stereotypical behaviour of Irish men and women everywhere was constantly at war with the reality of their life in Ballarat; expectations of how they would behave, being Irish, often seemed almost to determine how they did behave. Leading community, political and religious figures of the time constantly appealed to this emotional and reactionary persona, and were thus able to manipulate an important and influential proportion of the Ballarat population. Irish nationality was a tool in the hands of societal manipulators and unscrupulous individuals.

The classic example of the manipulation of Irishness arose in Ballarat in 1864 when the ebullient and notorious C. E. Jones, Victorian politician and identity extraordinaire,[46] addressed a political meeting in Ballarat. Jones himself was a Celtic mixture - son of a Welshman, a West Country man hailing from Devon - and with an apparent inherent dislike of Irish Catholicism which manifested itself in the various political ventures with which he became involved throughout his career. In 1864 Jones contested the seat of Ballarat East, which had a Roman Catholic minority, many of whom were concentrated on small holdings at Bungaree, or were splitters, carters and charcoal burners living in primitive conditions in the Bullarook

[46] C.E. Jones is described by Bate as "one of the most blatant adventurers and gifted demagogues ever to operate in Victoria." Bate, Weston, *Lucky City*, p. 138 *ff.*

Forest nearby.[47] In addressing a political meeting at the Ballarat East Town Hall, Jones' challenge to the hissing men from Bungaree:

"Gentlemen and Savages, - men of Ballarat and fellows from Bungaree…" has become immortalised in the annals of Ballarat politics[48]. Notoriously politically self-interested, Jones seemed to be determined to set the cat among the pigeons, and to play upon old prejudices.

He continued in similar derisive fashion, with Mr. W. B. Rodier in the chair. The hall was filled to capacity, and jeers and insults were on the agenda from the outset. The 'savages' (particularly a man in a brown hat who was singled out as a likely disruptor early in the piece) were not about to be lightly treated by either Mr. Jones or the Chairman, as their reception of the Speaker heralded, and amidst hisses and catcalls Jones attempted to "answer certain statements which had been made by savages and ruffians." Jones was not, however, permitted to outline his position, since a certain Mr. Dwyer caused another diversion by being taken into custody and telling the Chairman in a few well-chosen words where he should be ("at home at your books"!).

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[47] Bate, *Lucky City,* p. 138.

[48] The *Ballarat Star* takes up this image years later, when it discusses, in relation to projected changes to education in 1870, the need for help for children in remote areas… "in little settlements which the provisions of the Common Schools Act do not reach, but which the "half-time" system will bring within the pale of civilisation, that the very lowest depth has been reached, both in morals and manners." Here, suggests the *Star*, " a few splitters in a remote gully, the workmen about a bush slaughter-yard, or a little group of wood carters, form a community in which there is very little chance for its boys and girls to grow up into useful members of society, and there are many scores of such communities in our own district. Bullarook Forest abounds in them … the children grow up into a kind of savages, without education even of the simplest kind..." *Star,* 27 January 1870.

Jones' next attempt took on the 'savages' on their own terms:

> He stated that he would not be put down by such savages and cowards as were then present; they howled like a menagerie of wild beasts, and had doubtless been sent by the king of the howlers from Bungaree to create a disturbance, for they were never used to eloquence, and could not bear it when addressed to them. Howl though they might, [thundered Jones] wild beasts as they were, he would be heard.[49]

Jones addressed the "thick skulls" of the Bungaree men, pouring scorn on these "cocks upon their dung-hills"; he decried the disruption they caused, and suggested that whilst such behaviour might be acceptable "in the wilds of Tipperary", in a civilised colony "it was a disgrace". He defended his stand on particular issues, and amidst "awful uproar" and "tremendous applause" he likened those who would not listen to him to donkeys … donkeys, moreover, "who must be carefully watched lest they come to power in Victoria."

> Gentlemen present could form an opinion of what sort of a colony Victoria would be if the Bungaree element once became in power.

Jones was full of dire predictions …

> The press would be useless; the Parliament a corrupted sham; the colony a howling wilderness; and these savages were the kind of beings whom it was proposed to import - a fair specimen of the Cardinal's lambs, whom it was proposed should fatten upon Victoria's pastures.[50]

Such statements seem to echo Jones' earlier sentiments.

[49] *Ballarat Star*, 3 November, 1864, Supplement.

Howls of rage greeted this statement - "tremendous uproar and cries of "Turn him out," followed by curses and threats" - and so at this juncture, the candidate deemed it appropriate to sit down, though he rose again after five minutes of deafening and frightful uproar generously interspersed with horrible noises, yells, and howls, chaos.[51]

His next remarks left no doubt as to his bigotries and beliefs; Jones had no timidity at all in invoking all the prejudices associated with rural Ireland, and contrasting them with the so-called civilisation of Ballarat and Victoria. Nothing was more guaranteed to vigorously engage his audience, many of whom hailed from the very areas to which he was referring. Jones left no historical stone unturned: he drew a clear parallel between the issues of civil and religious liberty fought over at the Battle of the Boyne, and the apparent need to battle over the same issues on the election hustings of Ballarat East. He even went so far as to suggest that, judging by the tone of the current meeting, political enfranchisement of uneducated men (the 'savages', presumably) was a mistake. This threw the crowd into further "horrible uproar", which quickly turned to cheers when the candidate admitted that, despite "their cowardly manifestation of rampant ignorance and riot", he was ready to support the notion that the political privileges of the people should not be abridged. Jones' taunting notion of sending missionaries into Bungaree under strong police escort to distribute Protestant bibles to teach the 'ignorant crowd' there how to read was greeted with predictable uproar and tremendous applause. The crowd was really getting into its stride now, and the "horrible noises" being emitted were clearly issued as a challenge to Jones to be even more outrageous.

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[50] *Ballarat Star,* 3 November, 1864, Supplement.
[51] *Ballarat Star,* 3 November, 1864, Supplement.

He did not disappoint. Further references to educating the 'savage beast', unruly horses, asses, and ignorant men in need of enlightenment elicited

Figure 25 Savages of Bungaree

more howls and cries of "turn him out", and amidst the sea of waving fists, a shillelagh[52] was glimpsed. Things were getting serious; the police were unable to control matters, as HUMFFRAY election cards were thrown at the speaker, and Jones, seemingly enjoying himself hugely, was delighted to accuse his opposition (Humffray) of responsibility for the disordered meeting. Strong government, he continued, apparently undaunted by the near-riotous situation in front of him, was required in order to keep under control the very elements of savagery and ignorance displayed at the meeting. After a tumultuous vote on the suitability or otherwise of Jones as a candidate, the meeting closed, with yells, and shouts of "Jones for ever". The police were hard-pressed: Sergeant Larner lost part of his uniform when a mob rushed the Bench which was serving as a rostrum. Jones scuttled into the magistrates' room, the gas was turned off, and the 'savages' rushed for the doors. One of the noisiest meetings ever held in Ballarat was over. [53]

This occasion does offer some exaggerated examples of the vigorous cut and thrust of the early days of Victorian politics: the heckling and rabid overstatement, the acrimony and the passion, and the volatility with which particular issues were considered, adopted and then flung aside in the expediency of the moment.

The incident is remarkable for many reasons, but it is significant principally because of what it reveals about the stereotypical role of the Irish in Ballarat, and the ways in which knowledge of this stereotype was

[52] "Shillelagh": club, stick or cudgel.

used to manipulate them. Jones played unashamedly and unscrupulously on the emotions of the so-called 'savages', who in their turn reacted in the expected way. The report of the meeting tells us very little about the real hopes and expectations of the Irish in Ballarat, but it does demonstrate the manner in which myths about a people are perpetuated.

Jones was not an Irishman[54], but he showed that he was very aware of the kinds of triggers which would stimulate a response. His tactics appeared to work, for the meeting ended in uproar, and saddest of all for both the Irish and Ballarat was the polarising effect it had on the community. The 'savages of Bungaree' were, in 1864, still very far from becoming Australians. Jones, by his alienating tactics, had actually more clearly defined the boundaries, and his derision is one step away from an admission of fear, or at least an acknowledgment of respect that, as a voting lobby, the 'savages' and the 'people of the forest' were a force with which to be reckoned.[55] The election of 1864, with C.E Jones' barnstorming participation, was a classic example of the expedient manipulation of electoral misapprehension, hereditary racial tensions, and political self-advancement.[56]

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[53] *Ballarat Star*, 3 November, 1864, Supplement.

[54] Jones, in fact, enjoyed considerable support from the Orange Lodge, a fairly understandable source of pro-British and anti-Irish sentiment.

[55] Mary Sandow, in her unpublished commentary held in the Weston Bate Research Collection, City of Ballarat Library, in fact represents religious bigotry as an 1864 election issue, with some of the politicians manipulating the prejudices of the more naïve members of the populace for their own political ends.
See Sandow, Mary, "Ballarat Politics 1860 - 1869", p. 24.

[56] Jones won the election with a clear majority - 702 votes - with his nearest rival, Charles Dyte, on 521; Withers, *History of Ballarat,* p. 333. Weston Bate pointed out [*Lucky City,* p. 139 *ff.*], that "The election was as good as won on the strength of the passions aroused. It did not matter that scarcely anyone would have known or cared what specific proposals had been made."

And yet, the Irish in Ballarat were, in very many ways, far from the crop-growing, potato-farming 'savages' of popular belief. Bate pointed out that the idea of the Irish as subservient was challenged by the financial and

Figure 26 Killarney

social success of men like Martin Loughlin and Daniel Brophy.[57] Furthermore, the collective energy of a people who could, from earliest days, envisage and enact the construction of a mighty cathedral , deserves a more complete assessment. Indeed, the saga of the church building in itself is a remarkable story of achievement and dedication.

As early as 1856 money was being collected "for the erection of a magnificent edifice" provided by a large Government land grant on Bakery Hill.[58] Once the new township in the west began to be laid out, however, it was decided to locate the cathedral on the corner of Sturt and Dawson Streets. A committee was formed,[59] and a "handsome design", originally intended for the cathedral in Melbourne, was scaled down and presented for use in Ballarat. It was proposed that only the nave be constructed initially, until further funds should become available. The estimated cost was £5,800, and on the first day £600 was received in promises towards this total.

The first stone was laid by Bishop Goold on Sunday 7 February, 1858. On this auspicious occasion, a platform covered with an awning was erected alongside the stone to carry a neat temporary altar, in front of which were hung the national banners of England, France, and the United States, as well as the emblem of the Roman Catholic Church, with the inscription "*In Hoc Signo Vinces*". A long covered gallery for the choir, with the harmonium, completed the arrangement. High Mass was celebrated, Mozart's Twelfth Mass was sung, and, thankfully, the partial collapse of

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[57] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 148.
[58] Ebsworth, Rev. Walter, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, The Polding Press, Melbourne, 1973, p. 235.
[59] The committee comprised Col.W.C. Smith, Messrs. Cummins, Belford, Brown, Wrigley, Tappin, Forbes, Cummins, Keys, Keane, Daly, Graber, and Carey (Secretary). Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, p. 253.

the platform caused only a slight diversion. It was, perhaps, fortunate that the incident occurred towards the end of the service.[60] A crowd of about 1500 people witnessed the event, as well as the presentation to the Bishop of a chalice weighing nearly seventeen ounces, and a paten, both made of solid gold.

After some impressive fund raising (including a week-long bazaar, the first of its kind in Ballarat, which raised close to one thousand pounds), and one or two setbacks, the cathedral was opened on 8 November, 1863, only five years after the building campaign had begun. This, however was only the beginning: further commitment was already being made at the opening towards additional development. It was announced at the opening ceremony that about £8000 had already been spent on the cathedral, with a small debt of only £1700 remaining. Already, the church notables predicted the necessity for further funding, and indeed, in the months that followed, a further £2200 was raised and spent on the stonework, the cast-iron rails, fence, gates, wickets, and columns along the three sides of the church reserve, as well as the importation and installation of a very large and magnificent pipe-organ from Liverpool.[61]

Work continued towards the completion of the Cathedral, and the opening of the finished building took place on 6 August, 1871. Almost three thousand people crowded into the church and its approaches to hear Bishop Goold perform the blessing ceremony and celebrate High Mass. The later additions to the church had cost well over £13,000, bringing the total cost to £27,000. Amazingly, the debt at the opening was a mere £1400.

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[60] Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, p. 236.
[61] Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria,* pp.246 - 247.

Described as probably the finest and largest ecclesiastical building in the colony after St. Patrick's in Melbourne, it was a major achievement for the Catholic populace of Ballarat, and testimony to the drive and enthusiasm of the congregation, and its leaders. The short space of time which it had taken to raise funds and construct the building was indicative of the dramatic growth of the city of Ballarat - from alluvial wasteland to solid prosperity - and also of the collective vision which was held by the people of the town. St. Patrick's was no mere church: it was a fine cathedral, solidly funded and largely paid for. Furthermore, it was the grand expression of the Catholic commitment and strength in Ballarat, to be considered alongside the vigorous small church building program which was also being enacted in the city and environs at that time.

In 1875, Ballarat witnessed the arrival of a group of nuns from the famous Loreto Order. Led by Mother M. Gonzaga Barry, the order soon established the Abbey School, which by 1882 was a flourishing day school. St. Patrick's College was founded in 1889. By the 1880s, Bishop O'Connor had established in Ballarat the three great teaching orders: the Sisters of Loreto, the Sisters of Mercy, and the Christian Brothers. Catholicism, with its Irish overtones, was alive and flourishing in Ballarat from earliest days.[62]

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[62] The foundation of the Redemptorist Monastery in Ballarat, which began with the arrival of the first Redemptorists in 1888, is also indicative of the strength of the Irish Catholic presence in Ballarat. See *Ballarat Star,* 12 November, 1888, also McKeegan, Shaun, "The Ballarat Monastery, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour", Historical Report and Conservation Analysis, University of Ballarat, July 1998. The establishment of Nazareth House, orphanage for boys, established by Bishop Moore, and significantly funded by Irish philanthropist Martin Loughlin to the order of £2500 is another example. The Home was blessed and opened by Bishop Moore in August 1891. The new wing, funded by Loughlin's bequest, was opened in 1896. In 1903 another wing was added; the occupants numbered at this time 300. Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria,* pp. 267 -268.

The consecration of the Cathedral occurred on 19 November, 1891: in fact, this was the first cathedral to be consecrated in Victoria. Catholic church leaders from all over Australia were present and a choir of over one hundred voices under Richard Wrigley, "grand old Catholic of Ballarat" performed Hummel's Mass in E Flat. Irish Catholics of Ballarat were to the fore in the establishment not only of the Cathedral, but of the buildings and constructions surrounding it. Martin Loughlin and James Coghlan each donated £500 towards the establishment of the presbytery which was added to the cathedral property in 1891. Then, in 1900, Bishop Moore mentioned the need for a hall. Toward this cost Thomas Loughlin (nephew of Martin) donated £1000, and James Coghlan £500. Fortunately, there was already £1000 'left over' from the celebrations of St. Patrick's Day sports over the years, and yet another public appeal led to an unexpectedly generous amount of money being raised towards the cost of a new hall. Later the same year, the foundation stone of the new hall was laid. The land, building, and club-rooms cost £6653, yet the cost had been three quarters covered by the opening day.[63]

On 2 December, 1901, the *Ballarat Courier* reported on the formation of a "Celtic Club" which would use the new hall for meetings. The purpose of this organisation was to "promote harmony and good-fellowship amongst the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church in Ballarat, while at the same time providing rational amusement for the young men of the diocese."[64] On 5 December, the "St. Patrick's Social Club" was officially launched under the auspices of the Bishop himself, who was reported as being "anxious to conserve the interests of the Catholic men of Ballarat, and

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[63] Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria,* pp. 270 - 272.
[64] *Ballarat Courier*, 2 December, 1901.

desirous of promoting their social enjoyment."[65] The building of the great Cathedral, and its 'outbuildings', was not only a triumphal statement of Catholic pride and success on the Ballarat scene, but a solid consolidation of faith - almost, a fortification or defence against the potential loss of social and religious coherence within the Catholic community.

Ballarat was certainly a community strong in its Catholicism, and eager to glorify in civic guise this spiritual strength. But the Irish of Ballarat were not only interested in saving their immortal souls. Their presence was indicated throughout all levels of the social and community spectrum. The very men whose wealth and civic conscience funded the great churches and religious orders of Ballarat were also to be found owning the hotels and breweries which slaked the thirsts of the working men and women of the 'Lucky City'. A list of hotels in the Ballarat region in the fifties and sixties compiled by John Hargreaves[66] reveals no fewer than eighty four hotels with Irish names, many of them with Irish owners. Hargreaves numbered the rise and fall of one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three hotels, eight hundred and fifty six of which boasted individual titles. The Irish names in themselves ensured that the lilt and flavour of the old country pervaded the Ballarat environment: *Arrah - na - Pogue, Blarney Castle, Brian Boru, Dan O'Connell, City of Limerick, Donegal Arms, Dublin and Kilkenny, Erin go Bragh, Flower of Erin, Hibernian, Limerick and Killaloe, Shamrock, Star of Erin,* and more. Kimberly numbered seventeen prominent Irishmen in his *Ballarat and Vicinity*, amongst them the likes of the Hon. Sir

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[65] *Ballarat Courier,* 5 December, 1901.

[66] Hargreaves, John: *Ballarat Hotels Past and Present*, 1943, held in the Ballarat Library, Australiana Section.

Henry Cuthbert, K.C.M.G., K.C., MLC, prominent lawyer, entrepreneur, politician, philanthropist, and civic man.

William Acheson, accountant; John McKenna, mine manager and engineer; David McGrath, Justice of the Peace, and merchant; Edward Murphy, politician, Mayor, MLA, church man and Hibernian Society member; James Coghlan, brewer, and founder of Ballarat's famous brewing dynasty, philanthropist, Papal Knight; William Irwin, publican and mining speculator - the list is as impressive as it is long. Fitzgerald, Brophy, Long, Wilson, McVitty, Morton, Glenny, Gilpin, Purdue, King, Loughlin, and Cotter were all significant, successful and respected members of the Ballarat community in its first fifty years, and all of them very far from being classed as the 'savages' of Jones' parlance. Some of this group were Anglo/Irish, with impeccable social pedigrees from their Irish homeland[67], but philanthropy and success were certainly not restricted in Ballarat to the men in such a category. It is true that they number significantly in any list of outstanding Ballarat Irishmen, but such a list certainly crosses all religious and social boundaries.

In order to understand more clearly both the presence of the Irish in Ballarat, and the influence of their long-standing political and religious affiliations on that society, it is useful to examine one of the more interesting political battles involving Ballarat in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The election of 1880 can be seen as a microcosm of the

[67] Dianne Campbell is currently undertaking post-graduate research on the subject of Anglo-Irishness in Ballarat. In her paper "A Study in Influence: Anglo-Irish Lawyers in Ballarat" (2001), she identifies five (5) important Ballarat community members as being in this category (see p. 305, footnote 3. These were Henry Cuthbert, Joseph H. Dunne, Townsend MacDermott, R. L Poer Trench, and Robert Walsh. These men were well-educated and from

ways in which Irish Catholic prejudices and fears shaped the manner in which the election was fought, and the issues with which it concerned

Figure 27 Ballarat Irish

an elite background in Ireland, but Gordon Forth has argued that this background did not preclude the belief that they were nevertheless innately and irrefutably Irish. Campbell, p. 2.

itself. Here again, expected behaviour influenced political outcomes. The contest for Ballarat East involved three candidates: John James, James Russell, and Daniel Brophy. The debate invoked issues of East/West rivalry, Irish/British rivalry, and religious prejudice - the very stuff, in short, of nineteenth century Victorian politics. This election was not the first time in which Irish factionalism had polarised and shaped the outcome. By 1880, some lines - politically speaking - had been drawn, and allegiances were a little more firmly fixed. The so-called 'savages', in effect called into being by C.E. Jones in 1864, had become a social and electoral force to be reckoned with, and in 1880 the candidates largely stood or fell on their votes over a single issue, that of education.

The religiously driven factionalism which became such an issue in this election was part of the ongoing debated engendered by the Education Act of 1872. This Act provided for "free, secular, and compulsory" education. For years, Catholics and Protestants had fought each other over the issues of secular education in Government schools, and state aid to denominational schools. Local communities like Ballarat, with a significant population of Irish Catholic born, as well as the equally significant although not as numerically critical Orange Lodge vote, reflected the wider debate, and were polarised by the setting up of interest groups like the Ballarat East Education Defence League. This body, in the true tradition of Victorian factional politics, attempted quite openly to influence electoral and legislative outcomes.

The education debate had, from its inception, been a particularly vigorous one, but it was also bitter, protracted and sectarian, bringing out the best and the worst in electors and candidates alike at both colonial and local levels. The nature of the debate struck at the heart of what Victorians

Figure 28 Ballarat Irish (2)

believed their state was, and could be, and brought into play all kinds of preconceptions about hereditary powers, ancient grievances, and old factions - all legacies of a world left behind, but not forgotten. 'A Catholic' from Bungaree was determined:

> We will, therefore, go in for Berry and his team, and crush out without hesitation the Conservatives' attempt to establish in this free country the Irish "squireen" system. We will have none of the crawling servility here that we were forced to practice at home - none of the hat-in-hand flunkeyism so common in the old country.[68]

The irony inherent in reviving old animosities was that there was a distinct danger of drawing immovable lines where none had previously been drawn, and thus prolonging the divisiveness. In Ballarat, it was suggested that polarising Catholic opposition to the Education Act in the '80 election ensured the continued and secure existence of the bitter sectarianism which the Act would destroy. James Russell, Liberal candidate for Ballarat East, claimed in February 1880 that:

> The danger to the Education Act had resulted in its present security. Wherever danger had been descried bulwarks had been raised, and out of danger came safety. Six months ago, it could not be said the Act was safe; but it could be said now, for in Ballarat East alone there were 1400 pledged to its support.[69]

The election candidates engage three of the four ethnic groups with which this thesis is concerned: John James[70], born in Cornwall, and James Russell[71] from Scotland stood together for the so-called 'Liberal' cause, and the maintenance of the Berry government in power, whilst Daniel Brophy,[72] the Irishman, and sitting member, stood as an Independent, attempting to keep a foot in each of the Liberal and Conservative camps.

James and Russell were united by political expediency, with James, the primary candidate, and Russell selected by the eight hundred members of the Ballarat East Education Defence League, to run with James "for the loyal liberal interest".[73] Both candidates were honest, upright men: James was a prominent Wesleyan, a successful lay preacher and Temperance reformer, a Ballarat East Councillor, MLA for West Ballarat, holding several public offices. He was a respected and honourable gentleman with a confirmed and popularly acknowledged community involvement. Russell held similar qualifications: a Ballarat East retail background, with a history of Ballarat East politics similar to James'. He was a Berry supporter, a Temperance man, a total abstainer and Wesleyan preacher. As well, he was a leading Freemason and Rechabite, and a Justice of the Peace.

The issues for these men were clear-cut: "our programme is defined, and it is reform, retrenchment, a Mining on Private Property Bill, and the maintenance of the Education Act."[74] Both men were united in their

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[68] *Ballarat Courier,* 12 February, 1880.
[69] *Ballarat Courier*, 18 February, 1880.
[70] See Thomson, Kathleen and Serle, Geoffrey, *A Biographical Register of the Victorian Parliament 1859 - 1900,* ANU Press, Canberra, 1972, pp. 102 - 103.
[71] See *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, 1851 -1890, Carlton, MUP, 1966, pp. 75 -76.
[72] See Kimberly, W.B, *Ballarat and Vicinity,* Niven & Co., Ballarat, 1894, pp. 67 - 68.
[73] *Ballarat Star*, 13 February, 1880.
[74] *Ballarat Courier,* 24 February, 1880.

determination to protect the Education Act, which meant defeating the third candidate, Daniel Brophy. Brophy was probably the best of the three candidates, and despite (or perhaps because of) his independent stance, was widely liked, and respected by both his political colleagues and the voters. In a sense, he typified the 'new' Ballarat politics: a self-made man, a mining investor, publican, pillar of the Catholic church, Councillor, Mayor, Member of Parliament, Old Colonist, associated with the Ballarat Hospital and the Benevolent and Orphan Asylums, Hibernian Society co-founder and supporter, and a Knight of St. Gregory. Unfortunately it would seem that Brophy's attempts to espouse two political doctrines ended up confusing the electors, and losing him his seat.

His Independent position, whereby he swore to stand by the Education Act, and thus uphold the majority position, was severely compromised by his assurances to his most important constituents, the Bungaree 'savages', that he also stood for amendments to that same Act to accommodate the Catholic Church.

The *Courier* characterised Mr. Brophy's vacillations, and his perceived swinging between two camps, as typically Irish: he was "a true Conservative … in direct antagonism to the aspirations of the Liberal Party":

> Mr. Brophy is an Irishman and this will account for such a flat contradiction as he indulged in on this subject, for although Irishmen are proverbial for very many excellent and erudite qualities, they are certainly not distinguished for practical logic.

The *Courier* concluded by calling for all voters to turn away from dangerous Mr. Brophy, and vote for James and Russell.[75]

The *Star* supported Brophy, seeing him as

> a thoughtful man, addressing himself to the questions of the day from a broader than a mere party platform … he is for concession of the Catholic claim to recognition of the Catholic conscience and payment by results. In effect, he says the secularists can have their Act and their schools, and the Catholic claims be conceded all the same. But this doctrine the secular fanatics will not listen to yet, and if Mr. Brophy loses his election it will be on that question.[76]

The *Star* saw the writing on the wall: Brophy would go, sacrificed on the altar of his own political expediency. Unfortunately for Brophy, the *Star's* tolerance did not extend to the voters. Brophy lost his seat.

There seemed to be a deal of confusion about which way to vote. Entrenched conservatives within the Catholic Church exhorted Catholic voters at both colonial and local level to vote for whichever representative seemed best able to give them concessions on the Education Act. In keeping with political trends which veered away from party loyalties, issues rather than party lines were the order of the day. No power brokers, however, were above changing allegiances when it suited them, nor did they mind using any kind of available emotive rhetoric to influence outcomes. A correspondent to the *Courier* invoked ancient grievances to make his point:

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[75] *Ballarat Courier,* Editorial, 21 February, 1880.
[76] *Ballarat Star*, 20 February, 1880.

> … to overthrow the Berry Ministry - for what? To consolidate monopoly; to introduce the autocratic system of the old country - the system of tenant right: the system that has placed wealth and talent in a class; reduced the yeoman to the level of his cattle, blighted all genuine thought, smothered all genuine freedom. We Sir, we "the most ignoble vulgar", are to be blind stone blind, to this prime dodge of the Conservatives; we are to hasten forward the triumph of "Giant landlordism". Has history no lesson? Ireland no voice? Hark! Her people cry for bread. No, we will be true to ourselves, and support our old members, our true-hearted leaders.… Long live manhood and merit.[77]

For the Catholics, however, one thing shone out crystal clear against the clouded and turbulent backdrop of Victorian colonial politics: Catholics could not - must not - vote for any party or set of beliefs which claimed to support the Education Act.

In 1880, it was obvious that

> the Education question is the burning question to the Catholics of the Colony. The Education Act of 1872 is to them a glaring injustice and a standing insult … to the religious feelings of Catholics, because it offers them legalised paganism for a creed, and a shallow and conceited Minister for Public Instruction as a guide, in the place of their bishops and their priests; and also, because it usurps the authority of the parent over the child, which is one of the highest laws of heaven, or of earth, and which no Act of Parliament can overrule or abolish.[78]

In March 1880, the *Advocate* explained the situation even more graphically:

> All we want, and what we are entitled to, is relief from the oppression to which we are subjected under the Education Act. We

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[77] *Ballarat Courier*, Letter, 24 February, 1880.
[78] "Eamon" in *The Advocate,* 31 January, 1880.

> are taxed to support a system of education of which we cannot avail ourselves. It is to us what the forbidden fruit was to our first parents, what pork is to the Jew, what idolatry is to a Christian … We simply *cannot* take advantage of it. 'Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath Day', 'Thou shalt not steal' are commands which have not greater force with us than the commands of the Church 'Thou shalt not send thy child to a school where the Catholic religion is not taught.'[79]

But "A Bungaree Catholic" could not bring himself to vote for those who thundered thus: he was horrified at the thought of a Conservative victory, believing that "as Irishmen and Catholics we should shudder at the thought of a Conservative government being placed over us, knowing as we do the terrible persecutions our ancestors suffered at home under the same form of government." This correspondent to the *Courier* saw the clergy as conspiring with the Conservatives "who are determined to keep the Catholic People in ignorance", and he urged a vote for the Liberal cause, the Berry government, and the establishment "in this free country" of a "democratic and popular form of government."[80]

Bigotry, and fear of bigotry, blurred Ballarat's and the Colony's political vision. Voters' fears were played upon by manipulative editors, self-seeking politicians, and aggressive pressure groups who shrewdly assessed the political climate and campaigned accordingly to secure votes which might otherwise have been outside the recognised 'party' line. Irish Catholics were exhorted to 'maintain the rage' against traditional old world powers which sought to reassert themselves in this new country. The rest of the population, meanwhile, were warned, in direst tones, to beware of insidious papal authority and sinister priestly conspiracies. The *Courier*

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[79] *The Advocate,* 6 March, 1880.
[80] *Ballarat Courier*, Letter, 27 February, 1880.

quite blatantly accused Brophy of "endorsing the dictum of the priests against the Education Act" and threatened that "any candidate who takes this cause should find himself at the bottom of the poll when the election takes place." Their great fear was

> that the electors of this Colony will declare for clerical dictation, in preference to general progress and individual freedom. This would be such a step backwards in civilisation, common sense, and respect for human development, that the very thought is humiliating.[81]

The *Courier* was scathing in its criticism of the influence of the priests over the Ballarat Irish community, even suggesting, tongue in cheek, that the congregations give to the priest their proxy vote, in order to save time. In fact, one of the pre-election editorials toyed with ways in which this might happen:

> Supposing there are 100, 500, 1000 or 2000 members of a Roman Catholic Church. The priest should have the privilege of applying for an amalgamated elector's right for the full number of his flock. With that right he should record the number of his congregation; and thus make one act of the voting transaction.

The tone is frivolous, but the next lines belie that:

> The congregation would, of course, have no power of going to the polling booths. That would be done for them by the priests; their voting strength having been transferred under the amalgamated rights to their clerical advisers.[82]

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[81] *Ballarat Courier*, 5 February, 1880.
[82] *Ballarat Courier,* Editorial, 26 February, 1880.

The *Courier* believed that such a move would save the Catholic laity the "humiliation" of being "dictated to" at elections, and would also obviate the necessity for priests to hold meetings "which scandalise a free community". The *Courier* claimed that such a system was no less comical than the current situation, wherein "the priests force their flocks to vote as they dictate".[83] The public face of Catholicism was distasteful to the *Courier*, which mistrusted the apparent lack of independent thinking inherent in the power which the priests held over their congregations. Compared with the far greater freedom of thought and action commonly associated particularly with Cornish, Welsh and Scottish Protestantism, the domination of a centralised doctrine invariably aroused suspicion amongst those outside the charmed circle.

The *Courier*, blatantly Liberal and pro-Berry, continued to shudder at the spectre of menacing priests ruling the colony: on 26 February, two days before the election, they editorialised with great pomposity on the matter.

> We deplore, of course, that the laity of the Catholic Church should submit to the dictation of their clerical advisers in purely secular matters, quite as much as those papers and individuals do who are endeavouring just now to convince the Roman Catholic laity, that in allowing themselves to be driven like sheep by their pastors and masters in exercising the franchise, they are doing a wrong to themselves, and committing a grave error in the interests of their children.… The Catholic laity labour under the belief that they are bound to vote how the priests desire and instruct; that to act otherwise would be an offense against Mother Church - almost indeed, a severance of the connection. Let the Catholic laity, then, vote as they are directed; let them lay aside their own political convictions in deference to those of the priests; and let them do all they can to place a Conservative Government on the Treasury benches, although in their hearts they infinitely prefer that a Liberal

[83] *Ballarat Courier*, Editorial, 26 February, 1880.

administration should remain in office.

The Courier reviles this "grinding tyranny", cynically observing that one day the Catholic laity will see clearly that "the priests go for conservatism, as against the liberalism of their flocks because Conservatism is the most profitable for their cloth, inasmuch as it preserves their powers and sinecures from attack or interference."

> "Really" concluded the *Courier*, "the way in which the Catholic vote is manipulated by the priests is a thorough farce, and a complete disgrace to the free community which tolerates such an outrageous occurrence."[84]

The *Courier* consistently published material which suggested that the Irish Catholic mentality lent itself to manipulation and subjugation - much to the fury of some Catholics. "An Irish Catholic", slightly embarrassed, admitted on 6 February 1880, that

> if we take into consideration the power wielded by the Catholic clergy over the Irish/Catholic population in this country, particularly in political matters, we must admit that the Irishman is by no means proof against clerical humbug ... The simplicity of the Irish Catholics in this respect is proof positive that their humble positions in society are mainly due to their own want of energy in not thinking for themselves in political matters, instead of allowing themselves to be led away by clerical coercion to vote against their own interests to suit the sort of views of individual priests.[85]

But "Rock of Ages" was outraged:

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[84] *Ballarat Courier,* Editorial, 26 February 1880.
[85] *Ballarat Courier*, 6 February, 1880.

> I charge you with bearing false witness against the Catholics of Ballarat, and I defy you to prove your assertion - that we are banded together to vote for any person or party ... neither bishop nor priest has ever advised or dictated to me how I should vote.[86]

Although Brophy was the most ambivalent of the three Ballarat East candidates, both James and Russell declined as well to associate themselves completely with any one political party, hedging their bets in the hope of sliding in to power on the back of a prevalent popular swing. James, in his address to the electors of Ballarat East on 17 February, said that he "wished it to be distinctly understood that he did not stand there necessarily as a supporter of the Government. He was independent of the Government or of any other particular party."[87]

The election of 1880 revealed something of the depth and nature of the emotional rhetoric which the Irish brought with them from the 'old country'. The language of persecution flowed freely, with editors, voters, and politicians alike openly invoking old grievances, and imposed indignities. They spoke of faith long-tested, of bitter and deep-rooted hatred of entrenched wealth and superiority, and, above all, they glorified the attainment of spiritual freedom. In invoking the acrimony of Ireland's longstanding and troubled relationship with Britain, the election commentators and participators ensured that these sad relics of an inglorious past were transported from the old world, and endured in the new. The new society of the goldfields was not, after all, to be free:

> What but Conservatism reduced the population of Ireland between the years 1846 and 1849 from 9,000,000 to little over 8,000,000 by far

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[86] *Ballarat Courier,* Letter, 27 February, 1880.
[87] *Ballarat Courier* 17 February, 1880.

> the greater portions dying of actual starvation, and thousands were sent on board floating coffins to die … What but Conservatism is the cause of the present fearful distress in Ireland, where the serfs live content on water and roots, and the rich gorge themselves on the fat of the land … Tenants and serfs who till the soil; the breadwinners, dying by hundreds of actual starvation; thousands of poor families, helpless and penniless ejected from their homes (with the assistance of British soldiers). Resistance is impossible, for Ireland is now filled with that grand old instrument the British bayonet, prepared to give the quietus to all turbulent starvelings. Could such fearful starvation and wretchedness exist except under a British Conservative Government, where the laws are made by and for a particular few. … Victorians, you cannot shut your eyes to the fact that this system of landlordism is fast growing in Victoria. …You came, and many of you brought your families with you to Victoria to better their condition. Then protect them from the artful machinations of the wealthy Conservatives, and secure for them equal political liberty; then show them that in Victoria man shall fetter man no longer, that liberty shall march sublime.[88]

A series of articles comparing and editorialising on the relative positions of Liberals and Conservatives appeared in the *Courier* throughout the lead-up to the elections; these, too, resurrected old grievances:

> … the misery which has existed in Ireland through the Conservative government and their tyrannical land system. It is a system that beggars millions to enrich hundreds, a system of Government, perhaps, the most tyrannical in the civilised world…. Reader, if you could but realise it for one moment, you would be warned to use every exertion to prevent leaving a similar dreadful legacy to your children in this beautiful colony. …It is not only Ireland that is groaning under British tyranny, but the whole of the working classes of Great Britain.

Much of the article proceeds in this vein, with the writer finally exhorting the Victorian voters to

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[88] *Ballarat Courier*, Letter, 24 February, 1880.

> shake off at once all prejudices in favour of such a degrading system. Allow no one to think for you; think for yourselves, and act accordingly. Seek political truth wherever it can be found, and obtain your children's freedom and equal political rights … Then Victorians, especially poor Victorians, avoid all Conservative cunning, creeds, and institutions, and on Saturday next, with your votes give assistance to the triumph of true democracy and progress, and say with Tom Moore -
> *"A curse and a blow for liberty, Joe.*
> *Whether tyrant, coward or knave.*[89]

Conversely, the priests and supporters of the Catholic faith trumpeted against the anathema of education "free, secular and compulsory": in a letter published in the *Advocate*, none other than the Bishop of Ballarat, Michael O'Connor himself, argued the case for "a Catholic education for Catholic children", and directed his spiritual electorate to unify politically to send to parliament the appropriate representatives "to do us justice". His use of emotive and provocative language epitomises the debate in Ballarat and Victoria as he spoke of the "long and arduous struggle before us", claiming that "where Catholics contend for principles they never yield, neither to time nor to persecution."[90] At all levels Catholic leaders and voters invoked the language of despair, shamelessly and openly manipulating emotions, reopening old wounds and stirring sectarian bitterness:

> What do they owe to Mr Berry, his Party and this organ? Heartless wrongs and bitter revilings. What do they owe to God and His priests? History, sacred and profane, contains the answer ... it is ... written ineffaceably on the heart and character of the Irish Catholic. That record of the debt is traditional, and in a sense, hereditary. It

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[89] *Ballarat Courier,* Article by John Palmer, 25 February 1880.
[90] *Advocate,* Letter, 14 February, 1880.

> helps to keep Catholicity not only alive, but burning in our native land, also to spread it over distant lands, and to preserve that union between priests and people which is in a measure their strength and their salvation; for with a priesthood faithful to God, and a people faithful to them, their enemies cannot, in a spiritual sense, prevail.[91]

An "Elector of Victoria", published in the *Advocate*, wryly observed that

> whatever else we have left behind, it seems we have taken good care to bring with us to this bright and sunny land of Australia those narrow-minded prejudices which tended so much to embitter social life in the Mother Country.[92]

In Ballarat as elsewhere the rhetoric was of light and darkness; candidates like Russell represented the Education Act as giving "light and lustre". In terms vague enough to mean very little, yet emotive enough to stir the voters, Russell pledged himself to protect and defend the Act:

> Here would grow up amongst the people an intelligent manhood suffrage ... the making of the Colony was in their hands ... He did not know whether the Repeal of the Corn Laws was more beneficial than the passing of the Education Act. Education gave light and influence and power.[93]

The polarising effect of the Catholic vote, and the need felt by all three political candidates in the election of February 1880 to address the one issue which preoccupied this religious/national minority, made them a force to be reckoned with - and the reckoning vehemently gave shape to whole Ballarat East election debate.

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[91] *Advocate,* 14 February, 1880.
[92] *Advocate* 17 February 1880.

It could be reasonably argued that the Irish in Ballarat were more complex than other Celtic identities. How much this was due to the historical diversity of the Irish, and how much simply to the larger size of the Irish immigrant population is difficult to say. Patterns of behaviour may be attributed, at least in part, to the divisive effects of religion and class struggle back in Ireland, and the way in which such patterns repeated themselves in the new society. Past patterns of privilege tended to be re-enacted on the colonial stage, but the old traditions were acted upon by new forces and new expectations. 'Successful' Irishmen (often, but not always, Anglo/Irish) were a considerable force on the Ballarat scene; so, too, were the small farmers, labourers and miners from Bungaree, Dunnstown, Sebastopol, and Ballarat East. To this extent, then, traditional divisions and loyalties were a part of the new society, but they combined in a different way. The unifying notion of a new and potentially 'freer' society acted like a leaven, causing old attitudes to take on a new perspective. The construction of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Sturt Street, described earlier, is an example of Irish wealth in Ballarat supporting Irish pride in Ballarat, and whatever divisions existed within the Irish community were overridden by the greater desire to 'make their mark' on the new society, and represent their religion.

Despite the social tensions within themselves, the Irish were still able, on occasions, to present a united front to the world, but this 'unison', so-called, was often in response to antagonising pressures from the rest of society, and in defence of Irishness, rather than as an 'example' of pro-active Irish patriotism. In 1874 a group of prominent Irishmen (William Acheson, David Fitzpatrick, Daniel Brophy, and Dr. King) formed the

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[93] *Ballarat Star*, 11 February 1880.

Ballarat Irish Club, with a view to promoting "the social union of Irishmen". Rules and regulations were drawn up at a meeting in June, 1874, at Brophy's Hotel.[94] Weston Bate suggested that the formation of such a club for the exclusive membership of Irishmen was more a reaction against the emergence of such organisations as the Freemasons, to which no Catholic with a religious conscience was able to belong.[95]

'In defence of Ireland's memory' seemed also to be behind the founding of the Ballarat Hibernian Society in 1868. Ostensibly formed to aid the poor and distressed Catholic folk in need of community welfare relief, it is illuminating to note the first of the objects of the society:

> to cherish the memory of Ireland. Also to endeavour to instil in the minds of the Celtic Australian race a veneration for the land of their forefathers, in order that they may imitate if not excel in the faith and virtues of that devoted nation, and to extend the hand of friendship to their co-religionists of every nationality, participating with them in a brotherly spirit, every benefit social and pecuniary the society affords.[96]

This 'object' appears to state fairly clearly that Catholicism, under the aegis of the Hibernian Society at least, went beyond the concept of "the nation", and provided grounds for a broader allegiance. The Ballarat branch was particularly strong, and was a key player in the move towards amalgamation with the St. Francis Society in Melbourne. The end result - the Hibernian and Australasian Catholic Benefit Society - emerged in 1871,

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[94] *The Rules and Regulations of the Ballarat Irish Club*, record held in the Mitchell Library, copy held in Bate Collection, Australiana Section, Ballarat Library.
[95] Bate, *Lucky City*, p. 260.
[96] *Courier*, uncertain date, probably April, 1868; article held in files of Catholic Archives, Ballarat, not sourced. Article entitled "Century - old Hibernian Society had its beginnings here", by Mr. Harry Burke, Ballarat Branch No. 2.

and remained a strong force in Ballarat for the rest of the century. The amalgamation with Melbourne brought its own set of difficulties, and almost did not go ahead. The situation reached stalemate when the Melbourne contingent (with Fr. Barry in the Chair) wanted to throw out the "Hibernian"[97] word from the Society's title; but the Ballarat delegation was clear: they would on no account sacrifice the word "Hibernian". The amalgamation attempt was abandoned until 1871, when it was finally conceded that the debated word be retained in the Society's new title. A further hiccup appeared when an objection was raised that there was no provision in the Friendly Societies' Act to form a benefit society for the purpose of cherishing the memory of another country. The impasse was resolved by placing the clause in the preface. "The Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society" finally came into being on 28 April 1871.

An important indication of the nature of 'Irishness' in Ballarat was the effort made for the relief of victims of the Irish agrarian depression of the eighties. In the months leading up to 1880, it was becoming increasingly evident to the people of Australia, and of Ballarat, that the situation in Ireland was developing more and more disastrously. Bad harvests in Ireland in the later 1870s, and particularly the three successive failures of 1877 - 79, coincided with the cheapening of food imports from abroad, including the Australian colonies. By 1879 the agrarian depression had halved Irish farm income. Evictions were also increasingly common as landlords dealt in their own ways with the changing economic circumstances.[98] As Macdonagh pointed out, the plight of the Irish at home in Ireland struck a totally sympathetic chord in their compatriots across the sea. As previously identified, Irish emigration to Australia in the

[97] "Hibernian": pertaining to, or characteristic of Ireland or its inhabitants".
[98] Macdonagh, *The Sharing of the Green,* pp. 111-112.

three decades before 1880 was largely drawn from the small farming and agricultural classes. There was a real probability that those suffering in Ireland were known to those Irish in Ballarat; certainly, the experience of distress in Ireland would not have been an unfamiliar one to the Irish of Ballarat.[99]

Figure 29 Irish Relief

[99] Macdonagh, *The Sharing of the Green*, p. 123.

The people of Ballarat were quick to unite in their efforts to rectify the situation. A public meeting at the Alfred Hall was called for 15 January, for the express purpose of forming a Relief Fund for the Irish people. The leading citizens of Ballarat were present: parliamentarians, local dignitaries, Mayors of Ballarat East and the City of Ballarat, men of the cloth from all religious persuasions - the *Star* listed them all. The City Mayor, (Mr. A.T. Morrison) was voted to the Chair. No adjective was spared in the effort made to inspire sympathy in the bosom of the Ballarat audience for the Irish plight:

> The Chairman … drew a sorrowful picture of the destitution under which the Irish people laboured, and compared their wretched lot with the happiness and comfort and blessings of peace and plenty with which the people in this favoured land were surrounded.[100]

The perspective taken in Ballarat towards this situation was interesting: certainly, there was recognition of the plight of the Irish, and the need to recognise "the wail from the other side of the ocean"; there was, however, accompanying this understanding, a further dimension to the Ballarat response. Not only was the Ballarat community quick to respond in a monetary and sentimental sense to the disaster, they were also extremely

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[100] *Ballarat Star,* 15 January, 1880.

pleased to be able to demonstrate clearly their definite ability to do so. Money was not a problem amongst the people of the 'lucky city' - so said the pundits, at least:

> They had money to spare in Ballarat, and he (the Chairman)was quite sure that the old reputation of her people for charitable acts would be well maintained. …
> However much we may suffer in this colony from the faults and neglects of the Legislative, it is undeniable that the bulk of the people have means at their command upon which they are able to draw for a charitable purpose….

There was a certain amount of positioning going on in the reports and editorials covering the Irish emergency; a sense of almost embarrassment about supporting the sometimes recalcitrant Irish:

> It was not a case of relieving an alien race. Ireland was although a conquered country, still part of the British crown. Her sons had done the best service in Old England's cause in the years gone by, and now that they were in sore distress and misery Englishmen and Scotchmen and all others were called upon to come forward and help their brothers and sisters in distress.[101]

Ballarat citizens were urged to support the beleaguered Irish in spite of the rebellious tendencies of the race; the predominant theme, urged the *Star,* should be to acknowledge the Irish as part of the Empire. In fact, aid to Ireland almost seemed reliant on justifying the special worthiness and privileged position of Ireland *within* the Empire:

> How much more hearty [the response] ought to be when the appeal is made on behalf of those bound to so many of us by national ties,

[101] *Ballarat Star*, 15 January, 1880.

and who belong to the Empire of which we are all proud to be members. It is true that just now … wild and threatening speeches are being made, and there is talk which would go to show that the Irish people are not content with their connection with the Empire, but we all know that they have stood as a nation by the Empire in the hour of need, and we may be sure that they will stand by it again when the occasion shall arise.[102]

Figure 30 Help for Ireland

[102] *Ballarat Star*, Editorial,8 January, 1880.

The prevailing mood was one of reconciliation of national or parochial differences in the better interests of the British Empire. Even the Irish, it was implied, would feel the undoubted benefits of the all-embracing benevolence and Christian charity of the British Empire. The *Star* wrote at length about the virtues of the Empire, and the way in which such a crisis drew all worthy and genuine members of this noble union together. The 'hands across the sea' sentiment was certainly a reality in 1880, and the *Star* welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate their fealty to the mother country:

> The occasion is one on which we can show worthily the unity of a people severed by half the world. We can prove to the people of Europe that though we have settled in a new region of the earth, "the mind still holds it own", and that one touch of nature proves our kinship with those who linger amidst the fogs, the cold and the drenching rains of Ireland.[103]

The Irish Relief campaign in Ballarat raised a phenomenal amount of money: a comprehensive final total is difficult to arrive at, but ongoing and impressive registers in the Ballarat newspapers list hundreds, if not

thousands of pounds worth of donations to the Irish cause. On 23 February 1880 the *Star* recorded a total of £1589.12.6. They did, indeed, it seems, have "money to spare" in Ballarat.

The broad picture of Irish engagement in Ballarat society in the years after the discovery of gold is more difficult to comprehend than any of the other three Celtic groups. The chapter title of "Unity within Diversity" gives some hint of the more divergent strands of 'Irishness' which existed within a coherency which has been labelled very comprehensively 'Irish'.
The strongly Irish Catholic enclaves of Bungaree and Dunnstown, in areas close to Ballarat city, became increasingly Irish as the century progressed. "Little Ireland" still exists today; as Cahir notes, birth or marriage still relates approximately two-thirds of the population to one or more other families. This is the Irish Catholic contingent as well. There is still only one school - a Catholic primary school; 'convergence of identities' does not seem to have occurred here. Small landowners and labourers, the inhabitants of Little Ireland, in fact forged their Irish identity so firmly onto the landscape and the community that the migratory action of other ethnic groups was to move away.

In Ballarat proper, Irish migrants were spread across the spectrum of mining and its support industries, as well as across the commercial and retail outlets of the city. Some of the 'successful' Irishmen in Ballarat were Anglo-Irish, born in the north of Ireland with privileged background, and of wealthy and upper class parentage. As Campbell has pointed out, these included men like Henry Cuthbert, Robert Le Poer Trench, Robert Walsh, Joseph Dunne, and Townsend MacDermott. These men claimed

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[103] *Ballarat Star,* 8th January, 1880, Editorial.

'Irishness', and were less concerned about religion than class[104], contributing in significant ways to the Ballarat community. Campbell characterises them as demonstrating "a strong commitment to principles of justice: gentlemen who saw their various roles as a duty of their superior attainment."[105] More research needs to be done in this area to more clearly identify the exact nature of the role of the Anglo-Irish. Others contributed in similarly significant ways, but outside the Catholic community. Their wealth and expertise spread itself across the broader community, and helped to build the 'lucky city' image in a more general way. Others remained within the Catholic community, and also managed to make an important contribution, in local cultural, recreational and governmental institutions.[106]

The ordinary Irish in Ballarat were also visible. They were numerically significant, predominantly Catholic, and a vigorous, vocal, and culturally important component with which others in the city always had to contend. The collective bitterness and sad legacy of their past remained vividly to the fore in many of the social and political issues which arose in Ballarat in the pre-Federation years; unlike the Welsh, the Cornish, and the Scottish, the Irish, it seems, could not forget to the same extent. Evidence of specifically Irish Catholic activity up to 1901 is stronger than for any of the other Celtic groups; they formed 'Celtic' organisations at a time when other

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[104] "religion was less of a distinguishing mark than class, and they were hardly one group as several … with significantly various motivations."
O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, p. 93.
[105] Campbell, "A Study in Influence …, p. 3.
[106] Campbell. 'Anglo-Irish Lawyers', 2001, refer to the tables at the conclusion of this paper, which identifies the number and names of institutions with which some of these prominent Anglo-Irish were involved. These included the church, sporting clubs, cultural groups, hospitals and asylums, municipal organisations, libraries and parliamentary and local government bodies.

Celtic groups were slowly fading into obscurity and, in defence of their Irishness, and alone amongst their fellow Celts, they celebrated their national day, St. Patrick's Day, up to and indeed into the twentieth century. A vivid account of one of those stirring events was contained in the 19 March 1899 edition of the *Ballarat Star*; it provides an insight into the persistent Irish presence in Ballarat at the time of Federation.

No expense was spared, and no holds barred as the folk of Ballarat made the most of the half-holiday granted by the Council to mark the special day of the Irish saint. The devout had early confirmed their place in the hereafter by attending a crowded High Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, celebrated by the Reverend D. O'Leary, of Maynooth College, Dublin, and presided over by the Catholic Bishop Dr. Moore. The body spiritual having been thus catered for, the body corporal surged eagerly onto the streets of Ballarat, which had been duly prepared for the occasion.

A holiday atmosphere prevailed and flags of various persuasions waved from buildings. The Union Jack flew from the tower of the City Hall, whilst the "national flag of old Ireland" was prominent everywhere, and bunting decorated the various trading establishments along Sturt St. The day had been declared a full holiday by some tradesmen, who clearly felt more inclined to join the throng of sightseers already in the streets than open their stores for business. The weather - for once, as the *Star* somewhat acidly remarks - was eminently suitable: "cool and bracing", and, thankfully, not wet.

The Irish national colour - green - was everywhere, with rosettes and ribbons decorating the clothes of many of the sightseers. Some also

proudly displayed what the Star described as the "genuine dear little shamrock", whilst others had to be content with a mere three-leaved clover. The good-humoured crowd hardly needed the official presence of Inspector Young and his trusty corps (twelve foot and four mounted) who were nevertheless present to keep order as anticipation mounted ahead of the beginning of the procession at 11.30am.

The Bishop's carriage led off the affair, with a band in the lead striking up a lively air; the banner of the Hibernian and Australasian Catholic Benefit Society followed, mounted on a gaily decorated jinker lent by Mr. McLennan, and drawn by four of Mr. M'Manamny's fine horses. Members of the order followed, and then the Ballarat Fire Brigade, with their brake and ladder carriage drawn by four horses, and their fire engine. The brigadiers turned out in force and marched in fine style, and then came the City and Sebastopol firemen, proudly displaying a shiny bright fire engine, and other appliances in first class order. Bulch's Model Band followed this "highly creditable" display, with members of the Catholic Young Men's Society coming closely behind.

Then ensued a somewhat unlikely collection of personages - including representatives of the Caledonian Society in a drag drawn by four high stepping greys and the society's pipers playing *Scots wha hae*. What the predominantly Irish crowd would have made of that (not to mention the presence of a number of lasses and lads arrayed in tartan and kilt) we will never know, but the *Star* certainly welcomed the "skirl that delighted the hearts of some Highland folk from the country". Inappropriate as it might seem, perhaps any national noise was better than none!

The banner of the League of the Cross, borne by half a dozen members, came next, followed by a hundred strong of their members. The children of the Catholic schools, proudly sporting a national rosette, marched into view next, followed by the Orphan Asylum Band, shrilly piping *The Minstrel Boy* and *The Harp that Once through Tara's Halls*. A crowd of young children from the Asylum surged behind, presumably thrilled to be a part of this annual celebration.

Down Sturt Street, to the corner of Lydiard they marched, and from thence the procession paraded up the south side of Sturt Street as far as Drummond Street; from here it proceeded to the Miners' Racecourse, where it was to disperse and become part of the great Sports Day being held there in honour of the Irish saint.

A motley and somewhat indeterminate collection of races and dances were then held, with large crowds filling the Grandstand to witness the Fireman's Handicap Hydrant Race, a Hop, Step and Jump, some Highland Pipe Music Marches (in costume), the Highland Fling (in costume, for boys, girls and adults), a Sailor's Hornpipe, an Irish Jig and Reel, and Putting a 50lb. Stone. A strong programme of horse racing - that activity so dear to the heart of every good Irishman - was conducted by the Ballarat Miners' Turf Club, with the total purse a generous eighty sovereigns. Races included the Trial Stakes, the Handicap Hurdle, the Farmer's Plate, the Distance Trot, the Flying Stakes, and, the event of the day, the St. Patrick's Day Hurdle. Twenty sovereigns was the prize for this event, which featured some of the best horses from around the area, sporting such delightful names as Phillips' Prior, Glenore, Nemesis, Brittannia, Colac, Annates, Kingfisher, Cronstadt, and Shamrock, who most appropriately won the event the previous year.

Merry-go-rounds and swinging boats took pride of place on the flat, and the whole of the proceedings was enlivened by the sounds of Prout's and Bulch's Bands. Those that were still left standing after all this diversity of physical exertion then moved on to the Alfred Hall for a Concert that evening, where a splendid variety company provided by entrepreneur Mr. Walter Sinnotte was to perform.

The crowd which packed the hall was treated to an orchestral overture of "Irish Melodies", followed by popular artist, soprano Miss Maggie Sherlock, who performed *Oft in the Stilly Night*, and was encored for her performances of *The Wearing of the Green*, and *The Kerrie Dance*. The Downard Sisters ("cleverest juvenile actors in serio - comic sketches" in Melbourne) followed with their "serio-comic" songs *I want to tell you something*, *Just because Ma put him into trousers*, *Yuso*, and *Lulu*, and later on in the programme, Mr. Downard's fine strong baritone voice treated the audience to *An Irish Colleen* and *Alone on a Raft*. Maintaining the flavour of the evening, Mr. Kirby, the comedian of the company, rendered in character the sterling Irish patriotic song *Search the pages of Irish History*, *How do they know I am Irish?*, and *M'Closkey's White Vest*, and Miss Coralie Barlow (late of America) sang *John James Riley*. The whole evening was completed by the dancing of the Sports Day's successful competitors, and a turn by Mr. Ringwood, the champion banjoist of Australasia.

At the close of festivities the audience, well-satisfied with the entertainment, hurried off home, making use of the special late trains to Buninyong, Ballan, Waubra, Linton, and Allendale, put on at excursion fares for the particular use of St. Patrick's Day patrons.[107]

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[107] *Ballarat Star,* 2 March, 17 - 18 March, 1899.

Patrick O'Farrell has argued that one of the main unifying principles of Australian history is the conflict between an Irish minority and an English majority.[108] He speaks of the growth and development of Australia in terms of cultures in conflict, and argues that the tension produced by this conflict was not destructive, but rather involved a "creative exchange" which "compelled Australia's inhabitants … to take stock of the nature of their society."[109]

In Ballarat, the role of the Irish was to stand outside the mainstream, and vigorously maintain the debate amongst themselves, and with the society at large, about the importance of being Irish, and its value to the society. Convergence, or interaction, occurred at various points in the half-century leading to Federation, yet the achievement of Ballarat's Irish was to maintain their Irishness within the context of the city's 'melting pot' of ethnic identities. Evidence indicates that the Irish in Ballarat inherited a number of stereotyped images which designated them (accurately or not) as semi-literate 'hayseeds' from a priest-ridden, poverty-struck background. Opposition to British rule was also a traditional position of the Irish, and the firmness with which they retained their nationality long after the other Celtic-Protestant groups had surrendered theirs may have been in response to a fear of assimilation under British rule. The strength of the Catholic religious presence in Ballarat, the polarisation of attitudes on political issues like education and the continuity and separateness of the Dunnstown/Bungaree population is a testament to the fact that the Irish in Ballarat, in some senses, never fully merged.

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[108] O'Farrell, Patrick, *The Irish in Australia*, New South Wales University Press, 1986, p. 11.
[109] O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia,* pp. 11 - 12.

More than any other Celtic group in Ballarat, the Irish were still there at the end of the century, but it should also be noted that the very fervour of their Irish presence obscures or distracts from the fact that the vast majority of Ballarat Irish, were in fact ultimately prepared to work relatively peacefully within a framework of accommodation and acquiescence to British laws and social values. It also indicated that the rest of the society, as evidenced through their contribution to relief funds, and their wholehearted and almost indiscriminate participation in parades and national celebrations, was also prepared to tolerate and accommodate the strong Irish Catholic presence.

In late nineteenth century Ballarat to be Irish was still significant, but to live in Ballarat, and be 'Australian', was paramount.

CONCLUSION

> "Yet there is something strange, I would agree,
> In those dumb continents below the Line.
> The roots are European, but the tree
> Grows to a different pattern and design;
> Where the fruit gets its flavour I'm not sure,
> From native soil or overseas manure."[1]

From the outset, this thesis has been informed by the desire to attain some understanding of 'being Australian', an issue which continues to preoccupy Australians to the present moment. The passion for genealogy which has spread across the nation in the last twenty years has been motivated by a deep-seated and only latterly recognised desire to understand the genesis of nationhood. In Ballarat today, there exists a flourishing Cornish Association, a Scottish Association, and an Irish Association, all products of the drive to seek out our roots, to understand 'how we came to be what we are'.

Recent historians have attempted, in a broad sense, to understand Australia's 'multiple identities' on a national scale, and sought to explain "the fundamental characteristics of Australian society"[2] in terms of modern theories of nationalism. Richard White[3] acknowledges the difficulty of discovering "the real Australia", and rejects the artificiality of seeking a

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[1] Hope, A.D., "A Letter from Rome", in Hope, A. D., *Collected Poems 1930 -1970*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1972, p. 129.
[2] Alomes, Stephen, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Nature of Australian Nationalism 1880 - 1988,* Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p.11.
[3] White, Richard, *Inventing Australia Images and Identity 1688 - 1980*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981.

general, all-purpose 'identity', whilst Gregory Melleuish[4] seeks an interpretation which encompasses the richness of the multiple identities of modern, multi-cultural Australia. Both historians have a clear purpose: to take into account the variety and richness of human endeavour in Australia, and from thence to come to an understanding of what it means to be Australian. Both historians, being governed by one of the dominant quests of history, are seeking to impose some kind of order on the collection of facts - the "mad mosaic" of fleeting images - which sometimes blurs the historian's quest for clarity, or for the ordering 'tool' with which to achieve understanding. Yet this search for order must be tempered by the need to allow diversity, and to resist the temptation to overgeneralise.

This study has addressed the search for an Australian identity by presenting and examining the fifty years of "Australia's trajectory towards nationhood"[5], 1851 - 1901, in the light of the experiences of the four Celtic groups in the city of Ballarat. By presenting a broad picture of the journey of the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish and Irish people through the last fifty years of the decade, this study has sought to both document the richness and diversity of the Celtic migrant experience by addressing White's "rich mix of the many social and cultural identities",[6] and to identify and describe Melleuish's "essential unity - the objective, if largely unknowable, order which underlies all creation"[7]. The study has achieved this through homing in on significant cultural public events, as reported by the newspapers, using such accounts as a window into understanding the process of 'becoming Australian'. It has also been shown that by identifying the differing experiences of the Scottish, Cornish, Irish and

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[4] Melleuish, Gregory, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia A Study in Intellectual and Cultural History,* Cambridge University Press, 1995.
[5] Evans, Michael, "The Whole Digging World", Thesis for M.A (Public History), Monash University, July, 1994, p. 86.
[6] White, "Inventing Australia Revisited", 1997, p. 21.

Welsh, it is possible to build a larger picture, and thus suggest the existence of a second level of comprehension, a sub-strata or rationale which underlies and informs White's journey towards understanding, and Melleuish's "objective and universal experience of humanity."[8] White claims the unknowing involvement of "all Australians" in "the historical process, in building cultures, in forging relationships, in developing senses of place", but maintains that only a few of these would name this "Australia".[9] He implies an underlying, though somewhat unconscious, process. Melleuish is not perturbed by the "unknowable", and argues for the "essential unity" - the "order" which is inherent in all things.[10] Both writers seek understanding of the process of 'becoming Australian'. This thesis argues that such understanding can be arrived at through the examination of a more specific scenario.

Each Celtic group displayed individual traits based on, or springing from, individual historical experiences and backgrounds. The Irish brought with them their Catholicism, their political awareness, and their urgent desire for a new life, springing in part from the bitter experiences of the famine and the political and religious turmoil of their Mother Ireland. The Welsh were the enthusiastic bearers of a proud literary and cultural heritage which they self-consciously bequeathed to the land of their adoption. The Cornish arrived metaphorically as well as physically armed with pick and shovel and mining expertise, and applied their practical know-how to the virgin riches of the Ballarat field. Both the Welsh and Cornish were solid and committed proponents of Methodism, and from the beginning strongly established the non-conformist religions as a viable element in Ballarat life. The Scottish

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[7] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism,* 1995, p. 12.
[8] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism*, 1995, p. 1 4.
[9] White, "Inventing Australia Revisited", 1997, p. 21.

Presbyterian ethic, too, informed much of what this group attempted in Ballarat; their pragmatism and business acumen contributed in large part to the commercial success of the city, whilst their noble aspirations to beautify the city were forever immortalised in the creation of the statues and gardens of Ballarat.

Conzens, in reference to ethnicity in the United States,[11] claims that the "melting pot" syndrome - the idea that all ethnic groups are rapidly and easily assimilated - should be called into question. Conzens proposes the idea that migrant groups reject assimilation, suggesting that individual migrant cultures generate particular and strong efforts to *maintain* their own culture. In Ballarat, it is possible to discern determined self-conscious efforts by each of the individual Celtic groups to uphold and preserve their Celtic ways in the face, not so much of pressure to assimilate (since before their coming, there was little or no white society), but of pressure to retain their own identity in the face of the great emptiness and confusion which did constitute this "land of contrarieties".

The Welsh were quite open about the necessity of bringing their culture to the new land; the Cornish and Scottish less so, while the Irish tended to remain Irish in spite of everything. But they all showed a tendency to recreate the trappings and representations of 'home', whether by overt demonstrations like Eisteddfoddau, St. Patrick's Day, Caledonian Games, or Cornish wrestling, or by the more subtle, yet nonetheless effective means of introducing a religious morality, a sense of social justice, and a concept of political and material advancement.

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[10] Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism,* 1995, p. 12.

Conzens points out that historians have at last begun to understand that immigrants did not necessarily move in a straight-line manner from what she calls "old-world cultures" to becoming (for her purposes) American. She attempts to explain ethnicity as "a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies pre-existing communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories."[12] This is a useful model for looking at the Ballarat Celts. Welsh, Cornish, Scottish and Irish communities were placed in a position of needing to constantly reinvent themselves according to the social and political realities of situations as they unfolded in the volatile and mutable climate of late nineteenth century Ballarat.

National groupings, and their associated cultural symbols, needed to be frequently reasserted and defined:

> ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both within the group and the host society. Ethnic group boundaries … must be repeatedly renegotiated, while expressive symbols of ethnicity (ethnic traditions) must be repeatedly reinterpreted.[13]

As Conzens points out, this ongoing 'reinventing' suggests an active participation and *consciousness* on the part of the various ethnic groups. In fact, the Celtic groups in Ballarat were often aware of their 'ethnicity', and conscious of the fact of its shaping (and being shaped by) the social environment in which they lived. The awareness of their national traditions in fact underlines an active participation by immigrants in determining the

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[11] Conzens, Kathleen Neil, Gerber, David A., Morawska, Ewa, Pozzetta, George E., and Vecoli, Rudolph J., "The Invention of Ethnicity: A perspective from the USA" , in *Journal of American Ethnic History,* Fall 1992, Volume 12, No. 1, pp. 3 - 41.
[12] Conzens, et al, "The Invention of Ethnicity", p. 5.

extent and nature of their group singularity. It presupposes that each group possessed a certain awareness of its identity as a 'national' group, and consciously promoted that identity or image within the community in which they existed. To this end, the Cornish knowingly banded together in small identifiable communities, and advanced the idea of the Cousin Jacks as expert miners; the Irish promoted and enjoyed St. Patrick's Day, and they, too, consciously moved into Irish 'enclaves' or settlements, to seek comfort from each other's presence. The Scottish unashamedly advanced the cause of the Caledonian Games, and led the way in erecting monuments to the glorification of their national heroes, whilst the Welsh commemorated their national day with fervour, and celebrated the richness of Welsh culture in a series of eisteddfoddau.

In the quest for an understanding of the development of a sense of being Australian in Ballarat in the first fifty years, Conzen's comments are illuminating. Her suggestion of conscious debate, and an intellectual awareness of the boundaries and trappings of ethnic communities match well what I have observed to be the active observance of, and loyal adherence to individual national types within the Ballarat community. And yet, out of this often deliberate 'tribalism' rose something more than an ultimately desperate clinging to racial attributes. Constant reassertion of ethnic characteristics and traditions was merely one side of a newly emerging phenomenon. The juxtaposition of this self-image against the realities of the new society created a duality, or even a conflict, as the multi-stranded society sought to 'renegotiate' its 'traditions' and resolve itself into a workable whole.

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[13] Conzens, et al, "The Invention of Ethnicity", p. 5.

First attempts to shape 'Australian-ness' did, indeed, emerge from the early goldfields societies. The Celtic groups, as significant participants in these societies, should therefore be seen as key players in the shaping of the earliest concepts of Australian nationalism.

The thesis has explored Patrick O'Farrell's theory that the real history of Australia must be sought by attempting to embrace "a wider truth and a broader humanity", and confirms his belief that understanding must come through the consideration of diversity, not the oversimplification of a monolithic kind of history. The study of the four major Celtic groups in Ballarat involves a study of diversity within the "melting pot" of Ballarat society, and acknowledges the role which they played in developing a more unified outcome from a series of diverse considerations.

O'Farrell's claim for the importance of a 'sense of place' is also borne out in this study of the Celtic groups of Ballarat, particularly with the Irish where the creation of "little Ireland" in the farming hinterlands of Bungaree and Dunnstown confirms the strength of the Irish love of 'home'. As well, the zeal with which the other Celtic groups of Ballarat fastened onto the re-creation of familiar political, religious, recreational, and physical community proximity scenarios demonstrates the truth of O'Farrell's assertion. It was never simply the power of the vast emptiness of the Australian sub-continent which alienated British cultures, but the very strength of their memory of their own past, and their own 'place' which, O'Farrell argues, was formative in the emergence of a "wider truth and a broader humanity."[14]

[14] O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, p. 10.

The thesis argues for the value of the empirical study of smaller ethnic groups played out against the backdrop of the bigger picture of the achievement of Federation, and the search for an Australian identity. It asserts the importance of constructing a strong narrative as a means of understanding the larger themes in Australian history whilst retaining a local focus. Rejecting White's need to "write the nation out of national history", the thesis yet acknowledges the importance of what White refers to as the need to "write about the many other identities of the people we name as Australians." But the thesis argues that the 'larger' themes can be best understood by studying and understanding their component parts. In this case, the individual emigrant stories of the Cornish, Welsh, Scottish and the Irish are each important in their own right, and also integral to the developing consciousness of becoming 'Australian'.

Distinguished American historian Bernard Bailyn predicted in 1982 that the role of the historian in the future would be to strengthen the narrative of history, and draw together the available information into "readable accounts". He foreshadowed the greater complexity of such narratives, but above all, he predicted that these accounts should be *dynamic,* concentrating on "change, transition, and the passage of time … they will show how major aspects of the present world were shaped - acquired their character - in the process of their emergence."[15] Bailyn believed that historians should be narrators of worlds in motion:

> The historian must re-tell, with a new richness, the story of what some one of the worlds of the past was, how it ceased to be what it was, how it faded and blended into new configurations, how at every stage what was, was the product of what it had been, and developed into what no

[15] Bailyn, Bernard, "The Challenge of Modern Historiography", *The American Historical Review,* 1982, Volume 87, pp. 23 - 24.

> one could have anticipated - all of this to help us understand how we came to be the way we are, and to extend the poor reach of our own immediate experience.[16]

This dissertation has tried to tell the story, 'the narrative' (or at least part of it) according to Bailyn's description. It has described and identified the diversity of the Celtic groups in Ballarat from 1851 - 1901, and it has attempted to capture and understand the nature and significance of the converging identities which characterised the assimilation and fading from view of the Celts of that city. Finally, it has argued that out of the changes wrought on these cultures over the years, emerged new configurations which perhaps contributed to unexpected outcomes. The vote for Federation was one of these.

The investigation traces the gradual inevitability of the loss of Celtic individuality, and draws attention to the increasing number of occasions on which the distinguishing feature of each Celtic story was not its separate strength, but its broad embrace of many cultures, including *all* things Celtic - an unlikely convergence, and one which may only have been possible in a land physically and spiritually removed from the one left far behind. The very beginnings of this convergence of identities has been demonstrated in the public 'accommodations' of Scottish nationalism with Irish song and dance, under the all-embracing convenience of the umbrella of British benevolence and Imperial supremacy. For three of the four national groups, the transition from love of Celtic homeland to the broader love of Empire made the step towards colonial pride that much easier; the inadvertent step towards developing an 'Australian' consciousness had been taken. Pride in

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[16] Ibid.

Ballarat enabled the transfer of specific Celtic loyalties: the golden city's wealth and beauty overruled more parochial allegiances:

> *Ut aurum metallorum pretiosissimum, sic tu es camporum aureorum princeps, urbiumque opulentissima.*
> "Because gold is the most valuable of metals, thus you are the leader of the goldfields, and the wealthiest of cities."[17]

In Ballarat this diminishing of Celtic nationalist fervour was the result of a slowly dawning realisation that the future of Ballarat - and, indeed, Australia - would lie not in the blind assertion of parochial loyalty, but in the considered espousal of a 'greater good'. To this end, it was, in nineteenth century Ballarat, seen as expedient to experience shared aspects of each individual colonial Celtic culture: the sound of the pipes flowed hauntingly through many community celebrations, epitomising an almost unwitting assimilation, and the cultural convergence of the four Celtic ethnic groups.

It is the conclusion of this thesis that it was the very multiplicity of elements which made up the quest for national identity and helped to define the nature of Ballarat society by the end of the 19th century. An energy and power seemed to emanate from the seemingly disparate national strands and antagonistic bickering (of which the Celtic groups were a part) which constituted the rich tapestry of life in the golden city up to 1901.

W. B. Withers, Ballarat's nineteenth century historian, posed the question which, in some ways, this dissertation has attempted to answer:

> How the links of race, geography, history, development, touch as we go along, and how small the globe seems. … Here, too, at the antipodes we are brought face to face with the facts of difference and commixture. Here, we mix more and more into one indivisible people;

[17] Withers, *History of Ballarat*, 1887, Preface to the First Edition, p. ix.

but the process began ages ago on the other side of the world. The centuries with their changes have been weaving us all together - and which is warp and which is woof who will say?[18]

[18] Withers, *A History of Ballarat,* 1887, p. 323.

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